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"GREAT IS TRUTH AND IT SHALL PREVAIL"

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CONTENTS

SRI AUROBINDO ON "SAVITRI"	1	FIFTY THOUSAND AMERICANISMS, by Bergen Evans	9
SAVITRI by Sri Aurobindo		BOOKS IN THE BALANCE	
Book VII: The Book of Yoga—Canto 5: The Finding of the Soul	4	Review by Rajanikant Mody of IN THE MOTHER'S LIGHT (Part I)	
THE INTEGRAL YOGA OF SRI AUROBINDO: The Triple Foundation		by Rishabhchand	10
by Rishabhchand	6	CLOUDS (Poem) by Norman Dowsett	11
SRI AUROBINDO AND MAN'S SOCIO-POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT		FLOWER SIGNIFYING "THE SUPRAMENTAL SUN" (Poem) by Romen	11
Part II: by C. C. Dutt	8	MYSTICISM AND SCIENCE by K. D. Sethna	12

SRI AUROBINDO ON "SAVITRI"

4

Obviously, the Overmind and aesthetics cannot be equated together. Aesthetics is concerned mainly with beauty, but more generally with *rasa*, the response of the mind, the vital feeling and the sense to a certain "taste" in things which often may be but is not necessarily a spiritual feeling. Aesthetics belongs to the mental range and all that depends upon it; it may degenerate into aestheticism or may exaggerate or narrow itself into some version of the theory of "Art for Art's sake". The Overmind is essentially a spiritual power. Mind in it surpasses its ordinary self and rises and takes its stand on a spiritual foundation. It embraces beauty and sublimates it; it has an essential aesthesis which is not limited by rules and canons; it sees a universal and an eternal beauty while it takes up and transforms all that is limited and particular. It is, besides, concerned with things other than beauty or aesthetics. It is concerned especially with truth and knowledge or rather with a wisdom that exceeds what we call knowledge; its truth goes beyond truth of fact and truth of thought, even the higher thought which is the first spiritual range of the thinker. It has the truth of spiritual thought, spiritual feeling, spiritual sense and at its highest the truth that comes by the most intimate spiritual touch or by identity. Ultimately, truth and beauty come together and coincide, but in between there is a difference. Overmind in all its dealings puts truth first; it brings out the essential truth (and truths) in things and also its infinite possibilities; it brings out even the truth that lies behind falsehood and error; it brings out the truth of the Inconscient and the truth of the Superconscient and all that lies in between. When it speaks through poetry, this remains its first essential quality; a limited aesthetical artistic aim is not its purpose. It can take up and uplift any or every style or at least put some stamp of itself upon it. More or less all that we have called Overhead poetry has something of this character whether it be from the Overmind or simply intuitive, illumined or strong with the strength of the higher revealing Thought; even when it is not intrinsically Overhead poetry, still some touch can come in. Even Overhead poetry itself does not always deal in what is new or striking or strange; it can take up the obvious, the common, the bare and even the bald, the old, even that which without it would seem stale and hackneyed and raise it to greatness. Take the lines:

*I spoke as one who ne'er would speak again
And as a dying man to dying men.*

The writer is not a poet, not even a conspicuously talented versifier. The statement of the thought is bare and direct and the rhetorical device used is of the simplest, but the overhead touch somehow got in through a passionate emotion and sincerity and is unmistakable. In all poetry a poetical aesthesis of some kind there must be in the writer and the recipient; but aesthetics is of many kinds and the ordinary kind is not sufficient for appreciating the Overhead element in poetry. A fundamental and universal aesthesis is needed, something also more intense that listens, sees and feels from deep within and answers to what is behind the surface. A greater, wider and deeper aesthesis then which can answer even to the transcendent and feel too whatever of the transcendent or spiritual enters into the things of life, mind and sense.

The business of the critical intellect is to appreciate and judge and here too it must judge; but it can judge and appreciate rightly here only if it first learns to see and sense inwardly and interpret. But it is dangerous for it to lay down its own laws or even laws and rules which it thinks it can deduce from some observed practice of the Overhead inspiration and use that to wall in the inspiration; for it runs the risk of seeing the Overhead inspiration step across its wall and pass on leaving it bewildered and at a loss. The mere critical intellect not touched by a rarer sight can do little here. We can take an extreme case, for in extreme cases certain incompatibilities come out more clearly. What might be called the Johnsonian critical method has obviously little or no place in this field,—the

method which expects a precise logical order in thoughts and language and pecks at all that departs from a matter-of-fact or a strict and rational ideative coherence or a sober and restrained classical taste. Johnson himself is plainly out of his element when he deals crudely with one of Gray's delicate trifles and tramples and flounders about in the poet's basin of goldfish breaking it with his heavy and vicious kicks. But also this method is useless in dealing with any kind of romantic poetry. What would the Johnsonian critic say to Shakespeare's famous lines,

*Or take up arms against a sea of troubles
And by opposing end them?*

He would say, "What a mixture of metaphors and jumble of ideas! Only a lunatic could take up arms against a sea! A sea of troubles is too fanciful a metaphor and, in any case, one can't end the sea by opposing it, it is more likely to end you." Shakespeare knew very well what he was doing; he saw the mixture as well as any critic could and he accepted it because it brought home, with an inspired force which a neater language could not have had, the exact feeling and idea that he wanted to bring out. Still more scared would the Johnsonian critic be by any occult or mystic poetry. The Veda, for instance, uses with what seems like a deliberate recklessness the mixture, at least the association of disparate images, of things not associated together in the material world, which in Shakespeare is only an occasional departure. What would the Johnsonian make of this *Rik* in the Veda: "That splendour of thee, O Fire, which is in heaven and in the earth and in the plants and in the waters and by which thou hast spread out the wide mid-air, is a vivid ocean of light which sees with a divine seeing"? He would say, "What is this nonsense? How can there be a splendour of light in plants and in water and how can an ocean of light see divinely or otherwise? Anyhow, what meaning can there be in all this, it is a senseless mystical jargon." But, apart from these extremes, the mere critical intellect is likely to feel a distaste or an incomprehension with regard to mystical poetry even if that poetry is quite coherent in its ideas and well-appointed in its language. It is bound to stumble over all sorts of things that are contrary to its reason and offensive to its taste: association of contraries, excess or abruptness or crowding of images, disregard of intellectual limitations in the thought, concretisation of abstractions, the treating of things and forces as if there were a consciousness and a personality in them and a hundred other aberrations from the straight intellectual line. It is not likely either to tolerate departures in technique which disregard the canons of an established order. Fortunately here the modernists with all their errors have broken old bounds and the mystic poet may be more free to invent his own technique.

Here is an instance in point. You refer to certain things I wrote and concessions I made when you were typing an earlier draft of the first books of *Savitri*. You instance my readiness to correct or do away with repetitions of words or clashes of sound such as "magnificent" in one line and "lucent" in the next. True, but I may observe that at that time I was passing through a transition from the habits of an old inspiration and technique to which I often deferred and the new inspiration that had begun to come.* I would still alter this clash because it was a clash, but I would not as in the old days make a fixed rule of this avoidance. If lines like the following were to come to me now—

*His forehead was a dome magnificent,
And there gazed forth two orbs of lucent truth
That made the human air a world of light—*

I would not reject them but accept "magnificent" and "lucent" as entirely in their place. But this would not be an indiscriminating acceptance; for if it had run—

*His forehead was a wide magnificent dome
And there gazed forth two orbs of lucent truth—*

* It is interesting to record that "at that time" Sri Aurobindo said he had originally written "luminous" instead of "lucent" but had cancelled it because it came in again "a little later" in a line which could not be touched—"a little later" meaning actually an interval of 25 lines!

Sri Aurobindo on "Savitri"—Continued from page 1

I would not be so ready to accept it, for the repetition of sound here occurring in the same place in the line would lack the just rhythmical balance. I have accepted in the present version of *Savitri* several of the freedoms established by the modernists including internal rhyme, exact assonance of syllable, irregularities introduced into the iambic run of the metre and others which would have been equally painful to an earlier taste. But I have not taken this as a mechanical method or a mannerism, but only where I thought it rhythmically justified; for all freedom must have a truth in it and an order, either a rational or an instinctive and intuitive order. (1946)

5

Man alive, your proposed emendations* of

A slow miraculous gesture dimly came

to

Miraculous and dim
Miraculously dim
Dimly miraculous
Miraculous and slow

} a gesture came

are an admirable exposition of the art of bringing a line down the steps till my poor "slow miraculous" above-mind line meant to give or begin the concrete portrayal of an act of some hidden Godhead finally becomes a mere metaphor thrown out from its more facile mint by a brilliantly imaginative poetic intelligence. First of all, you shift my "dimly" out of the way and transfer it to something to which it does not inwardly belong, make it an epithet of the gesture or an adverb qualifying its epithet instead of something that qualifies the atmosphere in which the act of the Godhead takes place. That is a preliminary hovec which destroys what is very important to the action, its atmosphere. I never intended the gesture to be dim, it is a luminous gesture, but forcing its way through the black quietude it comes dimly. Then again the bald phrase "a gesture came" without anything to psychicise it becomes simply something that "happened", "came" being a poetic equivalent for "happened" instead of the expression of the slow coming of the gesture. The words "slow" and "dimly" assure this sense of motion and this concreteness to the word's sense here. Remove one or both whether entirely or elsewhere and you ruin the vision and change altogether its character. That is at least what happens wholly in your penultimate version and as for the last its "came" gets another meaning and one feels that somebody very slowly decided to let out the gesture from himself and it was quite a miracle that it came out at all! "Dimly miraculous" means what precisely or what "miraculously dim"—it was miraculous that it managed to be so dim or there was something vaguely miraculous about it after all? No doubt they try to mean something else—but these interpretations come in their way and trip them over. The only thing that can stand is the first version which is fine poetry, but the trouble is that it does not give the effect I wanted to give, the effect which is necessary for the dawn's inner significance. Moreover, what becomes of the slow lingering rhythm of my line which is absolutely indispensable? (1936)

* * *

As to the double adjectives in the lines*—

Then a faint hesitating glimmer broke
A slow miraculous gesture dimly came,
The persistent thrill of a transfiguring touch
Persuaded the inert black quietude
And beauty and wonder disturbed the fields of God.
A wandering hand of pale enchanted light
That glowed along a fading moment's brink
Fixed with gold panel and opalescent hinge
A gate of dreams ajar on mystery's verge—

if a slow wealth-burdened movement is the right thing, as it certainly is here in my judgment, the necessary means have to be used to bring it about—and the double adjectives are admirably suited for the purpose. Do not forget that *Savitri* is an experiment in mystic poetry, spiritual poetry cast into a symbolic figure. Done on this rule, it is really a new attempt and cannot be hampered by old ideas of technique except when they are assimilable. Least of all by a standard proper to a mere intellectual and abstract poetry which makes "reason and taste" the supreme arbiters, aims at a harmonised poetic intellectual balanced expression of the sense, elegance in language, a sober and subtle use of imaginative decoration, a restrained emotive element. The attempt at mystic spiritual poetry of the

* These emendations were not suggested as improvements in any way on the original line of Sri Aurobindo's which was splendid (though Sri Aurobindo himself subsequently altered it because of a new interrelation in the final expanded recast of his poem). They were only a hypothetical desperate resort in the interests of a point which is made clear in the footnote at the end of the present section. The object was to see if a certain change in the manner of adjective-use was possible so that a technical variety might be introduced in the passage of which the line in question was a part. The emendations unfortunately involved, among other things, the omission of one or another of the descriptive terms used by Sri Aurobindo. But variants not involving this were also offered for discussion, as the footnote already referred to will show.

* The first two lines here are different from those that in the present version precede the rest of the passage (Vol. I, p. 3). The version on which Sri Aurobindo commented is that of 1936. But the comment does not lose its essential force when the place in which the passage now stands demands that it should begin:

Into a far-off nook of heaven there came
A slow miraculous gesture's dim appeal.

Only one pair of adjectives out of four closely occurring "doubles" drops out.

kind I am at demands above all a spiritual objectivity, an intense psycho-physical concreteness. I do not know what you mean exactly here by "obvious" and "subtle". According to certain canons, epithets should be used sparingly, free use of them is rhetorical, an "obvious" device, a crowding of images is bad taste, there should be subtlety of art not displayed but severely concealed—*Summa ars est celare artem*. Very good for a certain standard of poetry, not so good or not good at all for others. Shakespeare kicks over these traces at every step. Aeschylus freely and frequently. Milton wherever he chooses. Such lines as

With hideous ruin and combustion down
To bottomless perdition, there to dwell
In adamantine chains and penal fire

or

Wilt thou upon the high and giddy mast
Seal up the shipboy's eyes and rock his brains
In cradle of the rude imperious surge

(note two double adjectives in three lines in the last)—are not subtle or restrained or careful to conceal their elements of powerful technique, they show rather a vivid richness or vehemence, forcing language to its utmost power of expression. That has to be done still more in this kind of mystic poetry. I cannot bring out the spiritual objectivity if I have to be miserly about epithets, images, or deny myself the use of all available resources of sound-significance. The double epithets are indispensable here and in the exact order in which they are arranged by me. You say the rich burdened movement can be secured by other means, but a rich burdened movement of any kind is not my primary object, it is desirable only because it is needed to express the spirit of the action here; and the double epithets are wanted because they are the best, not only one way of securing it. The "gesture" must be "slow miraculous"—if it is merely miraculous or merely slow, that does not create a picture of the thing as it is, but something quite abstract and ordinary or concrete and ordinary—it is the combination that renders the exact nature of the mystic movement, with the "dimly came" completing it, so that "gesture" is not here a metaphor but a thing actually done. Equally a "pale light" or an "enchanted light" may be very pretty, but it is only the combination that renders the luminosity which is that of a hand acting tentatively in the darkness. That darkness itself is described as a quietude which gives it a subjective spiritual character and brings out the thing symbolised, but the double epithet "inert black" gives it the needed concreteness so that the quietude ceases to be something abstract and becomes something concrete, objective but still spiritually subjective. Every word must be the right word, with the right atmosphere, the right relation to all the other words, just as every sound in its place and the whole sound together must bring out the imponderable significance which is beyond verbal expression. One can't chop and change about on the principle that it is sufficient if the same mental sense or part of it is given with some poetical beauty or power. One can only change if the change brings out more perfectly the thing behind that is seeking for expression—brings out in full objectivity and also in the full mystic sense. If I can do that, well, other considerations have to take a backseat or seek their satisfaction elsewhere.* (1936)

6

About the image of the bird and the bosom† I understand what you mean,‡ but it rests upon the idea that the whole passage must be kept at the same transcendental level. It is true that all the rest gives the transcendental values in the composition of *Savitri's* being, while here there is a departure to show how this transcendental greatness contacts the psychic demand of human nature in its weakness and responds to it and acts upon it. That was the purpose of the new passage and it is difficult to accomplish it without bringing in a normal psychic instead of a transcendental tone. The image of the bird and the bosom is obviously not new and original, it images a common demand of the human heart and does it by employing a physical and emotional figure so as to give it a vivid directness in its own kind. This passage was introduced because it brought in something in *Savitri's* relation with the human world which seemed to me a necessary part of a complete psychological description of her. If it had to be altered,

*The point discussed by Sri Aurobindo is a genuine and important one but it may be mentioned that the question which elicited the discussion gave rise to this precise point by some carelessness of phrasing. As Sri Aurobindo himself was informed later, the slight suspicion of "obviousness of method" referred not to the closely repeated use of the double adjectives but to the manner in which two epithets had been thus used—that is, either without any separation of one from the other or immediately before a noun. An alternative—"A gesture slow, miraculous, dimly came"—was suggested, but admittedly the revelatory suspense in Sri Aurobindo's line was spoiled by the "gesture" being mentioned too soon. Also, "Miraculous, slow, a gesture dimly came" would blurt out things in its own way. "Yes, that is it," wrote Sri Aurobindo. And his general remark was: "The epithets are inseparable from the noun, they give a single impression which must not be broken up by giving a separate prominence to either noun or epithets."

†In an additional passage in the description of *Savitri* (Book I, Canto 2):

As to a sheltering bosom a stricken bird
Escapes with tired wings from a world of storms,
In a safe haven of splendid soft repose
One could restore life's wounded happiness,
Recover the lost habit of delight,
Feel like bright air her glorious ambience
And preen joy in her warmth and colour's rule.

‡"The simile of the 'sheltering bosom' and the 'stricken bird' makes an insufficiently intense and original impact on the reader. Doesn't it lower the high mystical level of image and symbol prevalent everywhere in the passage describing *Savitri's* being and nature?"

Sri Aurobindo on "Savitri" —Continued from page 2.

—which would be only if the descent to the psychic level really spoils the consistent integrality of the description and lowers the height of the poetry—I would have to find something equal and better, and just now I do not find any such satisfying alteration.

As for the line,

*The strength, the silence of the gods were hers,***

that has a similar motive of completeness. The line,

At once she was the stillness and the word,

gives us the transcendental element in Savitri, for the Divine Savitri is the word that rises from the transcendental stillness; the next two lines,

A continent of self-diffusing peace,

An ocean of untrembling virgin fire,

render that element into the poise of the spiritual consciousness; this last line brings the same thing down to the outward character and temperament in life. A union of strength and silence is insisted upon in this poem as one of the most prominent characteristics of Savitri and I have dwelt on it elsewhere, but it had to be brought in here also if this description of her was to be complete. I do not find that this line lacks poetry or power; if I did, I would alter it. (1946)

I doubt whether I shall have the courage to throw out again the stricken and "too explicit" bird into the cold and storm outside; at most I might change that one line, the first, and make it stronger. I confess I fail to see what is so objectionable in its explicitness; usually, according to my idea, it is only things that are in themselves vague that have to be kept vague. There is plenty of room for the implicit and suggestive, but I do not see the necessity for that where one has to bring home a physical image.* (1946)

I have altered the "bird" passage and the reptition of "delight"† at the end of a line; the new version runs—

As might a soul fly like a hunted bird

Escaping with tired wings from a world of storm

And a quiet reach like a remembered breast,

In a haven of safety and splendid soft repose

One could drink life back in streams of honey-fire,

Recover the lost habit of happiness,

Feel her bright nature's glorious ambiance

And preen joy in her warmth and colour's rule. (1946)

The suggestion you make about the "soul" and the "bird"* may have a slight justification, but I do not think it is fatal to the passage. On the other hand there is a strong objection to the alteration you propose; it is that the image of the soul escaping from a world of storms would be impaired if it were only a physical bird that was escaping: a "world of storms" is too big an expression in relation to the smallness of the bird, it is only with the soul especially mentioned or else suggested and the "bird" subordinately there as a comparison that it fits perfectly well and gets its full value.

The word "one" which takes up the image of the "bird" has a more general application than the "soul" and is not quite identical with it; it means any one who has lost happiness and is in need of spiritual comfort and revival. It is as if one said: "as might a soul like a hunted bird take refuge from the world in the peace of the Infinite and feel that as its own remembered home, so could one take refuge in her as in a haven of safety and like the tired bird reconstitute one's strength so as to face the world once more." (1946)

My remarks about the "bird" passage are written from the point of view of the change made and the new character and atmosphere it gives. I think the old passage was right enough in its own atmosphere, but not so good as what has replaced it: the alteration you suggest may be as good as that, but the objections to it are valid from the new viewpoint. (1946)

As to the sixfold repetition of the indefinite article "a" in this passage, one should no doubt make it a general rule to avoid any such excessive repetition, but all rules have their exception and it might be phrased like this, "Except when some effect has to be produced which the repetition would serve or for which it is necessary". Here I feel that it does serve subtly such an effect; I have used the repetition of this "a" very frequently in the poem with a recurrence at the beginning of each successive line in

** Vol. I p. 16. The remark upon it was: "This strikes me as a somewhat superfluous explanation, not remarkable in itself nor required poetically as a link."

* In reply to this note it was explained: "Your view is unexceptionable. But it was not exactly the bird's explicitness that was objected to. The remark—the image had better not be too explicit—was made with an eye to the somewhat common character of the image. I may be right or wrong; but at least meaning on this point of explicitness should be explicit enough now. I hope the changing and strengthening of the first line, which you speak of, will bring the alchemic touch."

† The twelfth line before the one ending with the word "delight" in the first version of the "bird" passage had been pointed out as ending with the same word—Even in earth-stuff, and their intense delight . . .

* The suggestion was: "Although your new version carries a subtle multiform image more in tune, in my opinion, with the general vision of the rest of the description of Savitri, 'one' who is himself a soul is compared to 'a soul' acting like a bird taking shelter, as if to say: 'A soul who is doing so-and-so is like a soul doing something similar'—a comparison which perhaps brings in some loss of surprise and revelation."

order to produce an accumulative effect of multiple characteristics or a grouping of associated things or ideas or other similar massings. (1946)

I am afraid I shall not be able to satisfy your demand for rejection and alteration of the lines about the Inconscient and the cloak. I looked at your suggestion about adding a line or two in the first case, but could get nothing that would either improve the passage or set your objection at rest. I am quite unable to agree that there is anything jargonish about the line any more than there is in the lines of Keats,

Beauty is Truth, Truth Beauty—that is all

Ye know on earth and all ye need to know.

That amounts to a generalised philosophical statement or enunciation and the word "beauty" and "truth" are abstract metaphysical terms to which we give a concrete and emotional value because they are connected in our associations with true and beautiful things of which our senses or our minds are vividly aware. Men have not learnt yet to recognise the Inconscient on which the whole material world they see is built, or the Ignorance of which their whole nature including their knowledge is built; they think that these words are only abstract metaphysical jargon flung about by the philosophers in their clouds or laboured out in long and wearisome books like *The Life Divine*. But it is not so with me and I take my stand on my own feeling and experience about them as Keats did about his own Truth and Beauty. My readers will have to do the same if they want to appreciate my poetry, which, of course, they are not bound to do.

Is it really a fact that even the ordinary reader would not be able to see any difference between the Inconscient and Ignorance unless the difference is expressly explained to him? This is not a matter of philosophical terminology but of common sense and the understood meaning of English words. One would say "even the inconscient stone" but one would not say, as one might, of a child, "the ignorant stone". One must first be conscious before one can be ignorant. What is true is that the ordinary reader might not be familiar with the philosophical content of the word Inconscient and might not be familiar with the Vedantic idea of the Ignorance as the power behind the manifested world. But I don't see how I can acquaint him with these things in a single line, even with the most illuminating image or symbol. He might wonder, if he were Johnsonianly minded, how an Inconscient could be teased or how it could wake Ignorance. I am afraid, in the absence of a miracle of inspired poetical exegesis flashing through my mind, he will have to be left wondering. I am not set against adding a line if the miracle comes or if some vivid symbol occurs to me, but as yet none such is making its appearance.*

In the other case also, about the cloak, I maintain my position. Here, however, while I was looking at the passage an additional line occurred to me and I may keep it:

The darkness failed and slipped like a falling cloak

From the reclining body of a god.

But this additional line does not obviate your objection and it was not put in with that aim.† You have, by the way, made a curious misapplication of my image of the careful housewife; you attribute this line to her inspiration. A careful housewife is meticulously and methodically careful to arrange every thing in a perfect order, to put every object in its place and see that there is no disharmony anywhere; but according to you she has thrust a wrong object into a wrong place, something discordant with the surroundings and inferior in beauty to all that is near it; if so, she is not a careful housewife but a slattern. The Muse has a careful housewife,—there is Pope's, perfect in the classical or pseudo-classical style or Tennyson's, in the romantic or semi-romantic manner, while as a contrast there is Browning's with her energetic and rough-and-tumble dash and clatter.

You ask why in these and similar cases I could not convince you while I did in others. Well, there are several possible explanations. It may be that your first reaction to these lines was very vivid and left the mark of a *samskar* which could not be obliterated. Or perhaps I was right in the other matters while your criticism may have been right in these,—my partiality for these lines may be due to an unjustified personal attachment founded on the vision which they gave me when I wrote them. Again, there are always differences of poetical appreciation due either to preconceived notions or to different temperamental reactions. Finally, it may well be that my vision was true but for some reason you are not able to share it. For instance, you may have seen in the line about the cloak only the objective image in a detailed picture of the dawn where I felt a subjective suggestion in the failure of the darkness and the slipping of the cloak, not an image but an experience. It must be the same with the line,

The strength, the silence of the gods were hers.

You perhaps felt it to be an ordinary line with a superficial significance; perhaps it conveyed to you not much more than the stock phrase about the "strong silent man" admired by biographers, while to me it meant very much and expressed with a bare but sufficient power what I always regarded as a great reality and a great experience. (1946)

* What the commentator wished for was some symbolic suggestion as in other phrases of Sri Aurobindo's that made the Inconscient a black dragon or a black rock. As an alternative he desired a further touch of vividness to drive home the distinction between the Inconscient and Ignorance, as in another line in *Savitri*: "And the blind Void struggles to live and see."

† It may be noted that the additional line was welcomed by the objector as making a subtle difference by bringing in just the suggestive touch which, though not introducing a direct affinity in the image to what goes before and comes after, provides it with the common mystical basis the various other images have, each in its own way.

SAVITRI By SRI AUROBINDO

BOOK VII: THE BOOK OF YOGA—Canto 5: The Finding of the Soul

Onward she passed seeking the soul's mystic cave.
 At first she stepped into a night of God.
 The light was quenched that helps the labouring world,
 The power that struggles and stumbles in our life;
 This inefficient mind gave up its thoughts,
 The striving heart its unavailing hopes.
 All Knowledge failed and the Idea's forms
 And Wisdom screened in awe her lowly head
 Feeling a Truth too great for thought or speech,
 Formless, ineffable, for ever the same.
 An innocent and holy Ignorance
 Adored like one who worships formless God
 The unseen light she could not claim nor own.
 In a simple purity of emptiness
 Her mind knelt down before the unknowable.
 All was abolished save her naked self
 And the prostrate yearning of her surrendered heart.
 There was no strength in her, no pride of force;
 The lofty burning of desire had sunk
 Ashamed, a vanity of separate self,
 The hope of spiritual greatness fled,
 Salvation she asked not nor a heavenly crown:
 Humanity seemed now too proud a state.
 Her self was nothing, God alone was all,
 Yet God she knew not but only knew he was.
 A sacred darkness brooded now within,
 The world was a deep darkness great and nude.
 This Void held more than all the teeming worlds,
 This blank felt more than all that Time has borne,
 This dark knew dumbly, immensely the Unknown.
 But all was formless, voiceless, infinite.
 As might a shadow walk in a shadowy scene,
 A small naught passing through a mightier Naught,
 A night of person in a bare outline
 Crossing a fathomless impersonal Night,
 Silent she moved, empty and absolute.
 In endless Time her soul reached a wide end;
 The spaceless vast became her spirit place.
 At last a change approached, the emptiness broke;
 A wave rippled within, the world had stirred;
 Once more her inner self became her space.
 There was felt a blissful nearness to the Goal;
 Heaven leaned low to kiss the sacred hill,
 The air trembled with passion and delight.
 A rose of splendour on a tree of dreams,
 The face of Dawn out of mooned twilight grew.
 Day came, priest of a sacrifice of joy
 Into the worshipping silence of her world;
 He carried a mortal lustre as his robe,
 Trailed Heaven like a purple scarf and wore
 As his vermillion caste-mark a red sun.
 As if an old remembered dream come true,
 She recognised in her prophetic mind
 The imperishable lustre of that sky,
 The tremulous sweetness of that happy air
 And, covered from mind's view and life's approach,
 The mystic cavern in the sacred hill
 And knew the dwelling of her secret soul.
 As if in some Elysian occult depth,
 Truth's last retreat from thought's profaning touch,
 As if in a rock-temple's solitude hid,
 God's refuge from an ignorant worshipping world,
 It lay withdrawn even from life's inner sense,
 Receding from the entangled heart's desire.
 A marvellous brooding twilight met the eyes
 And a holy stillness held that voiceless space.
 An awful dimness wrapped the great rock-doors
 Carved in the massive stone of Matter's trance.
 Two golden serpents round the lintel curled,
 Enveloping it with their pure and dreadful strength,
 Looked out with wisdom's deep and luminous eyes.
 An eagle covered it with wide conquering wings.
 Flames of self-lost immobile reverie,
 Doves crowded the grey musing cornices
 Like sculptured postures of white-bosomed peace.
 Across the threshold's sleep she entered in
 And found herself amid great figures of gods
 Conscious in stone and living without breath,
 Watching with fixed regard the soul of man,
 Executive figures of the cosmic self,
 World-symbols of immutable potency.
 On the walls covered with significant shapes
 Looked at her the life-scene of man and beast
 And the high meaning of the life of gods,
 The power and necessity of these numberless worlds

And faces of beings and stretches of world-space
 Spoke the succinct and inexhaustible
 Hieratic message of the climbing planes.
 In their immensitude signing infinity
 They were the extension of the self of God
 And housed, impassively receiving all,
 His figures and his small and mighty acts
 And his passion and his birth and life and death.
 And his return to immortality.
 To the abiding and eternal is their climb,
 To the pure existence everywhere the same,
 To the sheer consciousness and the absolute force
 And the unimaginable and formless bliss,
 To the mirth in Time and the timeless mystery
 Of the triune being who is all and one
 And yet is no one but himself apart.
 There was no step of breathing men, no sound,
 Only the living nearness of the soul.
 Yet all the worlds and God himself were there,
 For every symbol was a reality
 And brought the Presence which had given it life.
 All this she saw and inly felt and knew
 Not by some thought of mind but by the self.
 A light not born of sun or moon nor fire,
 A light that dwelt within and saw within,
 Shedding an intimate visibility,
 Made secrecy more revealing than the word:
 Our sight and sense are a fallible gaze and touch
 And only the spirit's vision is wholly true.
 As thus she passed in that mysterious place
 Through room and room, through door and rock-hewn door,
 She felt herself made one with all she saw.
 A sealed identity within her woke;
 She knew herself the Beloved of the Supreme:
 These Gods and Goddesses were he and she:
 The Mother was she of Beauty and Delight,
 The Word in Brahma's vast creating clasp,
 The World-Puissance on almighty Shiva's lap,—
 The Master and the Mother of all lives
 Watching the worlds their twin regard had made,
 And Krishna and Radha for ever entwined in bliss,
 The Adorer and Adored self-lost and one.
 In the last chamber on a golden seat
 One sat whose shape no vision could define,
 Only one felt the world's unattainable fount,
 A Power of which she was a straying Force,
 An invisible Beauty, goal of the world's desire,
 A Sun of which all knowledge is a beam,
 A Greatness without whom no life could be.
 Thence all departed into silence' self,
 And all became formless and pure and bare.
 Then through a tunnel dug in the last rock
 She came out where there shone a deathless sun.
 A house was there all made of flame and light
 And crossing a wall of doorless living fire
 There suddenly she met her secret soul.

A being stood immortal in transience,
 Deathless dallying with momentary things,
 In whose wide eyes of tranquil happiness
 Which pity and sorrow could not abrogate
 Infinity turned its gaze on finite shapes:
 Observer of the silent steps of the hours
 And the passing scenes of the Everlasting's play,
 In the mystery of its selecting will,
 In the Divine Comedy a participant,
 The Spirit's conscious representative,
 God's delegate in our humanity,
 Comrade of the universe, the Transcendent's ray,
 She had come into the mortal body's room
 To play at ball with Time and Circumstance.
 A joy in the world her master movement here,
 The passion of the game lighted her eyes:
 A smile on her lips welcomed earth's bliss and grief,
 A laugh was her return to pleasure and pain.
 All things she saw as a masquerade of Truth
 Disguised in the costumes of Ignorance,
 Crossing the years to immortality:
 All she could front with the strong spirit's peace.
 But since she knows the toil of mind and life
 As a mother feels and shares her children's lives,
 She puts forth a small portion of herself,
 A being no bigger than the thumb of man
 Into a hidden region of the heart
 To face the pang and to forget the bliss,

SAVITRI—Continued from previous page

To share the suffering and endure earth's wounds
 And labour mid the labour of the stars.
 This in us laughs and weeps, suffers the stroke,
 Exults in victory, struggles for the crown,
 Identified with the mind and body and life,
 It takes on itself their anguish and defeat,
 Bleeds with Fate's whips and hangs upon the cross,
 Yet is the unwounded and immortal self
 Supporting the actor on the human scene.
 Through this she sends us her glory and her powers,
 Pushes to wisdom's heights, through misery's gulfs;
 She gives us strength to do our daily task
 And sympathy that partakes of others' grief
 And the little strength we have to help our race,
 We who must fill the role of the universe
 Acting itself out in a slight human shape
 And on our shoulders carry the struggling world.
 This is in us the godhead small and marred;
 In this human portion of divinity
 She seats the greatness of the Soul in Time
 To uplift from light to light, from power to power,
 Till on a heavenly peak it stands, a king.
 In body weak, in its heart an invincible might,
 It climbs stumbling, held up by an unseen hand,
 A toiling spirit in a mortal shape.
 Here in this chamber of flame and light they met;
 They looked upon each other, knew themselves,
 The secret deity and its human part,
 The calm immortal and the struggling soul.
 Then with a magic transformation's speed
 They rushed into each other and grew one.

Once more she was human upon earthly soil
 In the muttering night amid the rain-swept woods
 And the rude cottage where she sat in trance:
 That subtle world withdrew deeply within
 Behind the sun-veil of the inner sight.
 But now the half-opened lotus bud of her heart
 Had bloomed and stood disclosed to the earthly ray;
 In an image shone revealed her secret soul.
 There was no wall severing the soul and mind,
 No mystic fence guarding from the claims of life.
 In its deep lotus home her being sat
 As if on concentration's marble seat,
 Calling the mighty Mother of the worlds
 To make this earthly tenement her house.
 As in a flash from a supernal light,
 A living image of the original Power,
 A face, a form came down into her heart
 And made of it its temple and pure abode.
 But when its feet had touched the quivering bloom,
 A mighty movement rocked the inner space
 As if a world were shaken and found its soul
 Out of the Inconscient's soulless mindless Night:
 A flaming serpent rose released from sleep.
 It rose billowing its coils and stood erect
 And climbing mightily stormily on its way
 It touched her centres with its flaming mouth:
 As if a fiery kiss had broken their sleep,
 They bloomed and laughed surcharged with light and
 bliss;
 Then at the crown it joined the eternal's space.
 In the flower of the head, in the flower of Matter's base,
 In each divine stronghold and Nature-knot
 It held together the mystic stream which joins
 The viewless summits with the unseen depths,
 The string of forts that make the frail defence
 Safeguarding us against the enormous world,
 Our lines of self-expression in its Vast.
 An image sat of the original Power
 Wearing the mighty Mother's form and face.
 Armed, bearer of the weapon and the sign
 Whose occult might no magic can imitate,
 Manifold yet one she sat, a guardian force:
 A saviour gesture stretched her lifted arm
 And, symbol of some native cosmic strength,
 A sacred beast lay prone below her feet,
 A silent flame-eyed mass of living force.
 All underwent a high celestial change:
 Breaking the black Inconscient's blind mute wall,
 Effacing the circles of the Ignorance,
 Powers and divinities burst flaming forth;
 Each part of the being trembling with delight
 Lay overwhelmed with tides of happiness
 And saw her hand in every circumstance
 And felt her touch in every limb and cell:
 In the country of the lotus of the head
 Which thinking mind has made its busy space,
 In the castle of the lotus twixt the brows

Whence it shoots the arrows of its sight and will,
 In the passage of the lotus of the throat
 Where speech must rise and the expressing mind
 And the heart's impulse run towards word and fact,
 A glad uplift and a new working came.
 The immortal's thoughts displaced our bounded view,
 The immortal's thoughts earth's drab idea and sense;
 All things now bore a deeper heavenlier sense.
 A glad clear harmony marked their truth's outline,
 Re-set the balance and measures of the world.
 Each shape showed its occult design, unveiled
 God's meaning in it for which it was made
 And the vivid splendour of his artist thought.
 A channel of the mighty Mother's choice,
 The immortal's will took into its calm control
 Our blind or erring government of life;
 A loose republic once of wants and needs,
 Then bowed to the uncertain sovereign mind
 Life now obeyed to a diviner rule
 And every act became an act of God.
 In the kingdom of the lotus of the heart
 Love chanting its pure hymeneal hymn
 Made life and body mirrors of sacred joy
 And all the emotions gave themselves to God.
 In the navel lotus's broad imperial range
 Its proud ambitions and its master lusts
 Were tamed into instruments of a great calm sway
 To do a work of God on earthy soil.
 In the narrow nether centres' petty parts
 Its childish game of daily dwarf desires
 Was changed into a sweet and boisterous play,
 A romp of little gods with life in Time.
 In the deep place where once the Serpent slept,
 There came a grip on Matter's giant powers
 For large utilities in life's little space;
 A firm ground was made for Heaven's descending might.
 Behind all reigned her sovereign deathless soul:
 Casting aside its veil of Ignorance,
 Allied to gods and cosmic beings and powers
 It built the harmony of its human state;
 Surrendered into the great World-Mother's hands
 Only she obeyed her sole supreme behest
 In the enigma of the Inconscient's world.
 A secret soul behind supporting all
 Is master and witness of our ignorant life,
 Admits the Person's look and Nature's role.
 But once the hidden doors are flung apart
 Then the veiled king steps out in Nature's front;
 A Light comes down into the Ignorance,
 Its heavy painful knot loosens its grasp:
 The mind becomes a mastered instrument
 And life a hue and figure of the soul.
 All happy grows towards knowledge and towards bliss.
 A divine Puissance then takes Nature's place
 And pushes the movements of our body and mind;
 Possessor of our passionate hopes and dreams,
 The beloved despot of our thoughts and acts,
 She streams into us with her unbound force,
 Into mortal limbs the Immortal's rapture and power.
 An inner law of beauty shapes our lives;
 Our words become the natural speech of Truth,
 Each thought is a ripple on a sea of Light.
 Then sin and virtue leave the cosmic lists;
 They struggle no more in our delivered hearts:
 Our acts chime with God's simple natural good
 Or serve the rule of a supernal Right.
 All moods unlovely, evil and untrue
 Forsake their stations in fierce disarray
 And hide their shame in the subconscious's dusk;
 Then lifts the mind a cry of victory:
 "O soul, my soul, we have created Heaven,
 Within we have found the kingdom here of God,
 His fortress built in a loud ignorant world.
 Our life is entrenched between two rivers of Light,
 We have turned space into a gulf of peace
 And made the body a capitol of bliss.
 What more, what more, if more must still be done?"
 In the slow process of the evolving spirit,
 In the brief stade between a death and birth
 A first perfection's stage is reached at last;
 Out of the wood and stone of our nature's stuff
 A temple is shaped where the high gods could live.
 Even if the struggling world is left outside
 One man's perfection still can save the world.
 There is won a new proximity to the skies,
 A first betrothal of the Earth to Heaven,
 A deep concordat between Truth and Life:
 A camp of God is pitched in human time.

The triple aim of the Integral Yoga demands a revolutionary start from a basis wider and deeper than that of the traditional Yogas and with a sanction and equipment unknown, because unnecessary, to them. Since it seeks neither merely the personal salvation of the human soul, nor its self-extinction in the transcendent Absolute, nor any rapt and rapturous union with the Supreme in some Heaven beyond, but a constant, total and dynamic union with the Divine in life, it takes care to lay a triple foundation consisting of (1) the call and the response, (2) calm and equality and (3) surrender, each of which bears a special import and significance, and is indispensable to the effectiveness of the composite beginning, but none by itself is able to achieve any appreciable result. It is only a harmonious combination of these three primary factors that can ensure a more or less unimpeded progress on this long and difficult path of the Integral Yoga.

The Call and the Response

The most important initial element of the synthetic advance is the call and response. By the call we do not mean merely an aspiration for the Divine or a yearning for the bliss of the unitive life, but a definite call of our whole being, its unceasing and unflagging invocation to the Supreme to descend into us and manifest His supernal splendour in our life and nature. It is a call for the closest and completest union, but a constantly creative and revelatory union in our waking state—God's unimpeded self-expression and the perfect fulfilment of His Will in and through our transformed consciousness and being, steeped in the invariable peace and bliss of the essential identity, emergent even on the surface. This call springs from a mystic faith and perception of our inmost being that the escape or extinction of the individual soul in the unthinkable Eternal is not the end of our birth in terrestrial existence, and that there must be a definite purpose, a deeper intention behind the drag and drift of its ambiguous appearances—a reproduction of the luminous existence, consciousness and bliss of the Supreme in terms of man's mind, soul, life and body. This faith, this irresistible belief in the eventual Apocalypse in Matter informs the call with its steadfast intensity, and no other spiritual achievement, however high it may be, can fully satisfy those who have once had a glimpse of the unimaginable glory of this consummation. The aspiration of the individuals who have been inspired by this vision must needs, therefore, be different from the aspiration of those who have been following the traditional spiritual urge—it must be an original, pioneer aspiration lit with a new meaning of creation and winging towards new, unexplored horizons of an all-unifying Knowledge. The rejection of Nature for the realisation of the Spirit and the recoil from life for the wooing of Light seems to this comprehensive aspiration something too narrow and drastic; it insists rather on the reconciliation of Spirit and Nature, Light and life on the highest plane of creative unity. There is something revolutionary in the very grain of this call and aspiration, a bold departure from the beaten track and the germinal idea of an unprecedented spiritual fulfilment. Born of an assimilation of the highest spiritual aspirations of the past, this call embodies the Time-Spirit of the present and heralds the great Advent of which the seers have seen visions and the poets sung in strains of inspired delight.

But it must be "a fixed and unfailing aspiration that calls from below," "an aspiration vigilant, constant, unceasing—the mind's will, the heart's seeking, the assent of the vital being, the will to open and make plastic the physical consciousness and nature."* Nothing like it has ever been conceived or attempted before in the past, for at no period of the spiritual history of the world was humanity so athirst and ripe in its elite for being a manifesting channel of Sachchidananda in the material world as it is today, in spite of the deepening gloom that envelops it. The call that rises from the earth is a call of the widest and profoundest love offering itself as a ransom and holocaust for the great Advent.

The call from below is an earnest or rather, to be more psychologically accurate, a reflex of the call from above. The truth of the matter is, that it is the divine Will that first flashes down into the dumb secretcies of Matter and awakens there a memory and an aspiration for Light. This Will of the Divine is the Will of Love, and the aspiration that rises from below is a resultant of its action. But the first reaction of the awakening soul to the touch of love takes the form of a flight of the alone to the Alone, —an intense, precipitate and all-excluding aspiration for a naked retreat to the Absolute. The soul, turning from what it regards as the "insoluble mystery of birth and the tardy process of mortality," impatient of the stranglehold of Matter and tired of the tossings of life, longs to reach its eternal Home of Love and Bliss. But, however intense and insistent this longing may be, it does not exhaust all the potentialities of the soul's aspiration. The mature soul, unveiling the mystery of life, regards this flight as a defeat and a frustration, and determines to fulfil the divine mission for which it has come down. Its call upon the Supreme is, therefore, a reflex of the call of the Supreme upon it to remember its mission and invoke His descent and manifestation in Matter. The normal spiritual aspiration of the awakened soul for the exclusive enjoyment of the peace and bliss of the Beyond turns in the mature soul, by an

* "The Mother" by Sri Aurobindo.

THE INTEGRAL YOGA

By RISHI

THE TRIPLE

absolute renunciation of all personal enjoyment, into an aspiration for the service of the Divine and the perfect fulfilment of His Will to manifestation. A sincere and constant call of the whole being of man is a guarantee of the response of the Divine—a response which is the seal and sanction of the accomplishment of the soul's mission in its terrestrial existence. In the Integral Yoga of Sri Aurobindo this response of the Supreme is the most momentous element, and without it no amount of human endeavour can achieve the great objective of supramental manifestation.

Calm and Equality

The second strand of the foundation is calm and equality. No Yoga can be based on the quicksand of a restless nature, subject to the assaults of blind desires and emotions and impulses; least of all this Yoga which demands an immense and immutable foundation for its complex dynamic action. Calm, a state of wide tranquillity, is indispensable to the initial Yogic movement of concentration and introspection. In the other Yogas, calm is established by means of a fixed preparatory discipline of the nature, by *shama*, *dama*, *uparati*, etc. or by a progressive renunciation of life and its normal activities and a detachment of the witness soul from the movements of Nature, so that by an intensive concentration the central consciousness may pass into its own depths or rise to its own heights to realise its divine purity and freedom. For the Integral Yoga this basis of negative calm, acquired by a suppression or a lulling of the lower unrest, is not enough; for, its aim being the transformation and perfection of the whole nature of man, it needs an untrembling foundation of a positive and permanent calm. A negative calm may well serve as a vaulting board for a leap into the Self or the Spirit, but fails as a platform or pedestal for a radical conversion and new-modelling of nature. Therefore the initial movement of quiet detachment from the turmoil of nature has to be supplemented by a conscious opening and invocation to the spiritual calm, so that it may descend into us and fill our being with its invulnerable tranquillity. In the beginning of the Yoga one feels the calm growing in that part of one's being which is most turned to the Light, while the other parts may still be weltering in the habitual disorder and disquiet. One can learn—it comes by a steady will and practice—to live in that island of calm and feel secure against the winds and waves of the encircling ocean. But gradually this calm spreads out and infuses itself into the parts of the nature which have lent themselves to the general work of purification. It is at this stage that a descent from above is most essential, for it not only fortifies the existing calm, but widens it beyond measure, and imparts to it its own spiritual quality of a positive and permanent concreteness. What was being gained and maintained by an unrelaxed labour of effort and vigilance, becomes now a settled and secure possession capable of upbearing all the rush and swing of the contending psychological forces of light and darkness.

Sri Aurobindo attaches a great importance to this calm, for, according to him, nothing definite and abiding can be achieved without it. He deprecates all impatience and over-eagerness and straining as positively disturbing and impeding, and teaches that "wideness and calmness are the foundation of the Yogic consciousness and the best condition for inner growth and experience. If a wide calm can be established in the physical consciousness, occupying and filling the very body and all its cells, that can become the basis for its transformation; in fact, without this wideness and calmness the transformation is hardly possible." If the foundation of calm is not there, the descending Light and Power and Ananda will withdraw, leaving the nature to toss and tumble in its heaving obscurity. The long and uphill discipline of the Integral Yoga cannot be carried to its successful conclusion unless there has been established a serene calm, at least in the central consciousness, as the first achievement of the aspirant. It is only in peace and calm that one can contemplate the object of one's quest with a steady gaze of devotion, and at the same time detect the imperfections and impurities of one's nature and reject them with a firm decision. Calm in the mind, calm in the heart of emotions, calm in the parts of life in which the executive energies have their play, and calm in the very cells of the body—this is what Sri Aurobindo means by calm as an essential element of the foundation of his Yoga of supramental self-transformation.

It is true that in some devotional Yogas in India, as also in some types of devotional mysticism in the West, a considerable premium is put upon over-eagerness and impatience in the spiritual life. Excessive and sloppy

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emotionalism is made to do duty for a quiet and intense devotion; the steady, white flame of the psychic (soul) which mounts straight towards God. The inevitable result of this extravagant emotional straining is a loss of poise and balance, which opens the door to the forces of disorder and confusion on the one hand, and clouds, if it does not altogether destroy, the faculty of inner perception and discrimination on the other. Much of the criticism and suspicion to which religious or spiritual life is often exposed derives its justification from this want of calm and collected poise in its adherents. A calm and confident strength, entirely reliant upon the divine Grace, is the best condition for progress in the spiritual life.

Equality and calm go hand in hand, helping each other. The Gita, following the spirit of the Upanishads, insists upon equality as the most essential base of the spiritual life. It even goes to the extent of asserting that equality is Yoga itself; so great is the importance it attaches to this bedrock quality of the soul. Describing equality Sri Aurobindo says, "Equality means a quiet and unmoved mind and vital, it means not to be touched or disturbed by things that happen or things said or done to you, but to look at them with a straight look, free from the distortions created by personal feeling, and to try to understand what is behind them, why they happen, what is to be learnt from them, what is it in oneself which they are cast against and what inner profit or progress one can make out of them; it means self-mastery over the vital movements,—anger and sensitiveness and pride as well as desire and the rest,—not to let them get hold of the emotional being and disturb the inner peace, not to speak and act in the rush and impulsion of these things, always to act and speak out of a calm inner poise of the Spirit.

"Equality means another thing—to have an equal view of men and their nature and acts and the forces that move them; it helps one to see the truth about them by pushing away from the mind all personal feeling in one's seeing and judgment and even all the mental bias. Personal feeling always distorts and makes one see in men's actions, not only the actions themselves, but things behind them which, more often than not, are not there. Misunderstanding, misjudgment which could have been avoided are the result; things of small consequence assume larger proportions. I have seen that more than half of the untoward happenings of this kind in life are due to this cause. . . . For a sadhaka, to surmount them and live rather in the calm strength of the Spirit is an essential part of his progress."*

Equality in the second sense as explained by Shri Aurobindo comes of a clear and constant perception, which deepens into experience, of the one Self or the one Divine everywhere, in all beings and all things. In its perfect state, it is "a calm, impartial and equal self-identification" with all beings and things. One comes to see and feel the one Being gleaming from behind the mask of every form, be it the form of a sage or a sinner, of a king or a pauper, of a man, an animal or a plant. It is this state of equality, which the Upanishads describe when they say, "He in whom it is the Self-Being that has become all existences that are Becomings, for he has the perfect knowledge, how shall he be deluded, whence shall he have grief who sees everywhere oneness?" It is a state of being infinite and universal, liberated from the shackles of the ego. It is to put on Brahmanhood and confront the world with the calm regard of the Eternal.

But it is not easy to have equality all at once in the beginning of one's Yoga. The whole play of the human nature is based on an inveterate and manifold inequality. The prana or vital is a whirlpool of desires and passions, it hungers and strains after objects that attract it and turn away from those that repel, exposing itself to the transient reactions of pleasure and pain, joy and grief. In order to establish equality in the prana, one must cast all desires out of it and train it to be calm and equal to all objects. Since the prana is essentially an instrument of enjoyment and not of craving, its final perfection will be an equal delight in all objects and an equal enjoyment of all its contacts with the world. The heart must likewise be rid of the inequalities of attachments and affections, hatred and fear and exultation and wrath and grief, and become wide and sweet and serene, a tranquil ocean of deep and happy spiritual feeling. The mind too must shed all its attachment to its own preferences and prepossessions, its habitual subjection to its own ideas and thoughts and opinions, and see in ignorance "a knowledge which is imprisoned and seeks and waits for

delivery, in error a truth at work which has lost itself or got thrown by the groping mind into misleading forms. . . . It will not hold itself bound and limited by its knowledge or forbidden by it to proceed to fresh illumination, nor lay too fierce a grasp on truth, even when using it to the full, or tyrannously chain it to its present formulations".* It must learn to be large and luminously equal to the infiltration and expansion of the Light in it through the intricate and often inscrutable play of darkness and twilight. Since the demand of the Integral Yoga on us is to be equal not only in the soul, but also in the whole of our nature, this preparatory purification will go on progressing till the equality thus acquired, passes into the spiritual equality, the eternal, unshakable equality of Sachchidananda Himself, that bases the multitudinous movement of the universe.

What we have considered so far is the passive or negative equality, which acquiesces in and receives all impacts of the world without betraying the slightest tremor of unquiet or disturbance. There are three ways of developing and establishing it in the nature. The first is the way of endurance, *titikshā* which is the way of the heroic or stoical will bearing down and crushing all reactions of dualities, and remaining firm and unmoved in the face of all opposition. The second is the way of indifference, *udāsīnatā*, which is the way of the philosophic intellect, detaching itself from the whirl of the lower energies and regarding them, with the eye of knowledge, as born of the ignorance or illusion of nature. The impartial indifference remains equal and impervious to all the shocks and surprises of life—a calm witness, silent and impassive and unassailable in its impassiveness. The third way is that of the Christian or Vaishnavic submission, *namas* or *nati*, a devoted resignation to the will of God and a quiet acceptance of all that comes,—happiness or suffering, honour or obloquy, victory or defeat, success or failure,—as the just dispensation of divine Providence.

But this passive equality, though an indispensable preliminary, is not enough for the basic perfection of the Integral Yoga; for, it is not a mere inhibition of the natural movements that is aimed at in it, but a conquest and conversion of them, a radical transformation. Therefore to the still peace of the passive equality has to be added the thrilled delight, the boundless Ananda of the positive and active equality which, armed with the power of the Spirit, returns upon the nature and its movements to subject and attune them to the divine Will and transmute them into a limpid and docile channel of its self-expression in the material world. The final perfection of equality will be an imperturbable vastness in the being, sustaining the rapturous dynamism of a harmonised and integrated nature for the outpouring of the splendour of the Divine in human life.

Surrender

The third element of the foundation of the Integral Yoga is surrender. Usually all Yogas are practised by one of the three means: (1) personal effort and tapasya, (2) personal tapasya aided and fortified by the divine Grace and (3) the direct working of the divine Grace and Force. The last means is that which Sri Aurobindo advises the followers of the Integral Yoga to avail themselves of, because it is the only means by which the great objective of the supramental transformation can be achieved. In this Yoga personal effort is used only at the initial stages, and that too not for any pre-planned purification or progress, but solely with a view to making the surrender complete and constant, which of course involves a considerable purification. The tapasya of the egoistic individual lies simply in resolutely willing and compassing its own abdication, its utter effacement, in favour of the true individual, the soul, and its eternal Master, the Divine. Each part of the complex human nature, each movement of its thought and feeling and emotion and sensation and action has to be surrendered and offered at every moment of life, so that disinherited and dispossessed, the ego may disappear altogether, and the Divine take up the charge of the whole being and lead it to the perfect fulfilment of its destiny. It must be clearly understood here that the Integral Yoga, whose only aim is the transformation of the entire nature of man and the unblemished manifestation of Sachchidananda in his life, cannot be practised by the normal or supernormal powers of his mind and heart. The path is so steep and long, it winds through so many virgin valleys and rugged rocks and is beset with so many banded forces of darkness that, except for the direct divine leading at every step, which a sincere call and an integral surrender cannot fail to ensure, the goal would hardly be realised. Besides the goal itself is something not only beyond the highest conception of the human intelligence, but beyond the highest reach of human powers; it can be attained only if the supreme divine Light consents to descend and lift man into its own domain. In the integral Yoga, it is the Divine who is the Sadhaka and the Siddha, the Guide and the Goal; but in order that His constant guidance may be available, it is imperative that the surrender of the aspirant should be ungrudging, unreserved, integral and absolute; and it must be a surrender to the supreme Consciousness Force of the Divine, the eternal Mahashakti, the supreme Mother.

We have now to proceed to consider who this Mother, the sole Pilot of the Integral Yoga, is, and how best we can surrender all ourself to Her transforming Love.

* Letters of Sri Aurobindo 1st Series.

* "The Synthesis of Yoga" by Sri Aurobindo.

SRI AUROBINDO AND MAN'S SOCIO-POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT

By C. C. DUTT

PART II

Sri Aurobindo begins his book, *The Ideal of Human Unity*, by observing that man knows very little of the why and wherefore of the evolution of his collective life. His sociology and his history do not unfold to him the inner meaning of "all this change and this continual streaming forward of human life in the channels of Time", of the institutions and the forms of corporate existence that he has evolved in his long history. What is very necessary today is a wider, wiser and more potent research.

Today, the ideal of human unity is pushing itself forward in our consciousness, though, as yet, in a vague manner. Its appearance in man's thought is an indication that Nature is going to attempt it, that it is going to determine largely man's life in the future. But, at the same time, it will be impossible of accomplishment till the mind and heart of man are truly prepared for it. Social and political adjustments can achieve little or nothing of a permanent character.

There has undoubtedly been in the past a tendency towards forming larger and larger human aggregates. But a larger aggregate is not, Sri Aurobindo warns, necessarily a boon. It is worth trying for, only if it means a richer, happier and more potent life for the individual and the group. In the centuries gone by, we have had innumerable instances where smaller units gave man a richer and fuller life.

"Modern Europe owes two-thirds of its civilisation to three such supreme moments of human history, the religious life of the congeries of tribes which called itself Israel and, subsequently, of the little nation of the Jews, the many-sided life of the small Greek city states, the similar, though more restricted, artistic and intellectual life of mediaeval Italy. Nor was any age in Asia so rich in energy, so well worth living in, so productive of the best and most enduring fruits as that heroic period of India, when she was divided into small kingdoms..."

The impulse of the great empires like the Moghul, the Gupta and the Maurya "was rather towards elaborate organisation than original, stimulating and creative." So far, so good. But there was in the small units an inherent defect characteristic of transience, often of disorder, which pushed man towards the formation of larger aggregates. These latter have sometimes been extensive empires, sometimes smaller states. Sri Aurobindo draws this distinction between the two. As a rule, the smaller nations had a more intense life than the big empires. This distinction becomes very clear when we compare life in a colossal empire like the Egyptian or Assyrian or Persian with the life in a Greek City State.

About the more modern countries Sri Aurobindo observes that Europe has lived all her later civilisation in England, France, the Netherlands, Spain, Italy, the small states of Germany, and that progress showed itself there and not in the huge mass of the Holy Roman or the Russian Empire. Sometimes even the bigger states have attained an intellectually vigorous life by concentration of vitality in some special centres like London, Paris and Rome. But the price that the nation had to pay was very great, for there ensued a marked stagnation in the life outside the metropolis. The Roman Empire is discussed at length in a later portion of the book, but there is a passing reference in the first chapter to both the advantages and the disadvantages of a strong and elaborate central organisation like that of Rome. The vast imperial structure, though outwardly strong, became rotten and began to crack and dissolve at the first shock from outside.

When we contemplate a social and political unification of the race, we have to consider all this difficulty beforehand and be warned in time.

Sri Aurobindo, next, proceeds to examine the collective units formed by man in the past and observes that the perfection of human life depends on our harmonising the two poles of our existence, the individual and the collective. The perfect society is that which favours the perfection of the individual. The perfect individual is he who helps in developing the perfect society—and, ultimately, the unity of the race. The very gradual process of Nature, the slow evolution of man's group life, has introduced a further complication. The family, the class, the tribe, the nation, the empire are the successive stages that man has passed through. But the earlier aggregates have, by no means, vanished, and man is called upon to bring about harmony and accord, not only between the individual and the group generally, but also between the greater and the lesser group.

There are many examples in history of both failures and successes, which are highly instructive. The two Semitic peoples, the Jews and Arabs both failed to develop an unified State, except for a very brief period. The Celts, Scotch and Irish, likewise, could not combine their clans to form a larger national aggregate. It was foreign rule which, ultimately, crushed out of existence their clan life. The failure of the Greeks to merge their city states in a Hellenic Kingdom culminated in their subjugation first by Macedonia, then by Rome and lastly by the Turks. The failure of Greece is as instructive to the student of history as the remarkable success of Rome. As to India, Sri Aurobindo says, "her whole past has been the attempt, unavailing in spite of many approximations to success, to overcome the centrifugal tendency of an extraordinary number and variety of disparate elements." In the end when the problem was not solved, Nature had recourse to her usual panacea of a foreign rule.

But even the organisation of a nation-unit does not bring about complete unity. For, the conflict of classes always remains. The progress of all the component parts of a people does not proceed at an equal pace. Some surge ahead, some stand still, some fall back. A dominant class is, therefore, bound to come out on top. And, as within a nation the rise of a dominant class is inevitable, so in the world the emergence of a dominant nation is unavoidable. This is the law of Nature and it has always occurred. At every stage of social evolution, Nature for her own purpose needs a particular type of man and whichever class produces that type easily will predominate at that stage—the sage, the warrior, the organiser of production, the toiler.

But this necessity of a dominant class or a dominant nation can only be a passing thing. The final aim of Nature cannot be the exploitation or subjection of one class by another. Such domination carries in itself the seed of its death. It ends in two ways; either by the ejection or destruction of the exploiter or by general fusion and equalisation. In Europe today, the masterful Brahmin and the masterful Kshatriya are sinking back into the mass of people. The present obstacle to a final equality seems to be the masterful Vaishya, the Capitalist, the profiteer, whom Tennyson once called the Mammon-worshipper.

About equality Sri Aurobindo says, "Absolute equality is surely neither intended nor possible... but a fundamental equality which will render the play of true superiority and difference inoffensive is essential to any conceivable perfectibility of the human race." A dominant majority should be on the look-out and abdicate in good time after imparting its culture, ideals and experience to the rest of the aggregate. If this is not done, misfortune will overtake the whole structure of society as has happened in India, "where the final refusal of the Brahmin and other privileged classes to call up the bulk of the nation as far as possible to their level, their fixing of an unbridgeable gulf of superiority between themselves and the rest of the society has been a main cause of eventual decline and degeneracy."

But even if the unity within has been achieved, the question of the individual still remains. The human individual is not like a body cell. He tends to exist in himself and to exceed the limits of the group. All societies that stand in the way of the perfection of the individual man and seek to coerce him must change or dissolve in the inevitable course of Nature. No plea of class interest or communal interest or national interest can save them from their inevitable destiny.

Individualism and collectivism are two human tendencies that are at constant strife. They appear equally matched and during the strife the balance leans now on one side, now on the other. Throughout this long-drawn struggle, they are possibly trying to arrive at some conclusion. But a compromise between two egoisms is no true conclusion. The only real solution is fusion of the two—"swallowing of each by the other" and the problem of State vs. Individual does not depend on the size of the State. Nor does it depend on the constitution of the State. The tyranny of the majority in a democracy is every whit as bad as the caprice of the autocrat. Even if the collectivity is all mankind, the problem will still remain,—in Sri Aurobindo's words, "even then the question will remain poised between man and humanity."

Was man always the member of a group or pack, or was he a lone animal to start with? History and sociology tell us that our race began with the all-engrossing group. Biology also appears to indicate that association was man's necessity for survival. Originally, in Matter, uniformity was the law of the group. Free variation and individual development began with the growth of Life and Mind. From the point of view of evolution, then, we can say that man started with uniformity and subservience of the individual and proceeded towards variety and freedom thereof. But there is a very old tradition in the race that man was a lone animal to start with. From the scientific point of view, if the human being was ever unsocial, he must have been anti-social too, preying always on other men, the implication of the saying, *Homo homini lupus*. The poetic point of view is, however, that the early unsocial age was an age when man was "freely social without society"—a golden age, some such romantic conception as we find in Rousseau's *Contrat Social*. We cannot ignore altogether this tradition of man's isolated life. Sri Aurobindo says, "It is possible that our progress has been a development in cycles (rather than in a straight line) with stages approximating to the noble dream of philosophical Anarchism—men associated by the inner law of love and light and right action." Various probabilities are put forth here, the most remarkable being "our progress may be a devious round leading from the easy and spontaneous uniformity and harmony which reflects Nature to the self-possessed unity which reflects the Divine".

However that may be, history and sociology tells us only one thing, that man has ever been an individual in the more or less organised group. There are three distinct types of this group life set forth by Sri Aurobindo. The first asserts the State idea at the expense of the individual—e.g. Sparta, modern Germany. The second asserts the supremacy of the State but seeks at the same time to give as much freedom, power and dignity as is consistent with its control to the individuals who constitute it—e.g. Athens,

Continued on page 9

FIFTY THOUSAND AMERICANISMS

By BERGEN EVANS

Americans have created or given new meanings to about 50,000 words in the past 300 years. These are now collected and comprehensively surveyed for the first time in the new *Dictionary of Americanisms*, edited by Dr. Mitford M. Mathews, of the University of Chicago Press. It is a valuable supplement to the "Oxford English Dictionary" and the two, together, with the "English Dialect Dictionary," constitute a complete survey of the English language as spoken in the past and at present.

Americanisms are not confined to any particular region or class and do not for the most part represent older forms abandoned by standard speech. They fall into two classes: words which first came into the English language in the United States and English words which have acquired a special meaning in American usage.

Of words first used by Americans many are thought to be American Indian names for native growths—such as tobacco, persimmon, opossum. New devices needed new names—bifocals, harmonica, mimeograph; and contributions to science—appendicitis, tularemia, moron. Words such as nerts, phooey, and bunk, expressing various degrees of disdain, are original Americanisms. New meanings for older English words have resulted in the American robin and pilecat, for example, being not the same animals as the European robin and polecat, but one looked and the other smelled sufficiently like their old-world counterparts to justify transferring the names. In a like manner, new objects, new circumstances, and new customs gradually forced new meanings into old words until they were wholly changed.

Of the 50,000 terms which the *Dictionary of Americanisms* lists as peculiarly American only about 1,600 are borrowings from other languages. This seems very few, but it may be attributed in part to a lag between the adoption of a word and its appearance in a dictionary such as this, where each entry must have passed into printed use before it is included. The greatest number of additions were borrowed from the Spanish—then, in descending order of their frequency, from the American Indians, the French and the Germans. The large number of Spanish words is due to the United States having incorporated a number of areas in which Spanish was the established language. Thus there are words such as adobe, which

is the name for clay or mud bricks dried by the sun and used in building adobe houses; arroyo, meaning the dry bed of a stream; mesa, a small, high plateau with steep sides; lariat, a long rope with a running noose at one end, used for lassoing or tethering animals, and buckaroo, another name for the ranch worker, or cowboy, of the American Southwest.

Most of the French borrowings came from frontier contacts early in United States development and account for such words as detour, prairie, mackinaw, portage and tobaggan. The mackinaw, for example, is a heavy short coat, named for Mackinac, in the state of Michigan, where the French at one time distributed supplies to the American Indians. The Dutch borrowings in contrast are domestic, suggestive of well-fed warmth and snugness—waffle, cooky, cruller. The American Santa Claus is taken from the Dutch Saint Nicholas. The German additions are also homely and everyday—wieners, pretzels, hunk and dunk. The wiener, or frankfurter is the main ingredient in the American "hot dog." Hunk means a large piece, as of bread, and dunk means to dip the bread into a liquid when eating. The American hamburger, a round, fried cake made of ground beef, originally was named for the city of Hamburg, Germany, but Americans now have cheeseburgers, beefburgers, nutburgers, turtleburgers and more of the same.

The origin of many Americanisms is unknown. These include words such as gimmick, meaning a secret or a tricky device; grouchy, which means to be sulky or ill-tempered; dogie, the name given to a motherless calf in the American West; shindig, American slang for a merry party or dance; bull-doze, meaning to frighten by violence or threats; charley horse, meaning a stiffness caused by straining a muscle; and hundreds more. Even the midwestern state of Wisconsin is not certain what its name means. And an old automobile is known to Americans as a jalopy, but they do not know why.

Many of the 50,000 words in the *Dictionary of Americanisms* eventually may gain international usage, but at the present, only one can establish such claim. It is the American O.K., recognized as "all right; correct; approved" wherever language is spoken.

(Special Feature from "United States Information Service")

SRI AUROBINDO AND MAN'S SOCIO-POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT—Continued from opposite page.

modern France. There is a third type in which the State abdicates as much as possible to the individual, boldly asserting that it exists for his growth and to assure his freedom. Behind this third attitude there is a half belief that the best interest of the State is assured by granting the fullest freedom to the individual. "England has been, until recently," said Sri Aurobindo 30 years ago, "the greatest exemplar of this type." But even then he found "the collective or State idea breaking down the old English tradition" and feared "that before long the great experiment will have come to an end in a lamentable admission of failure by the adoption of Germanic discipline and efficient organisation towards which all civilised humanity seems now to be treading."

We have already noticed that the tyranny of an absolute monarch and the tyranny of the majority are forms of the same tendency, the tendency of the State to suppress the freedom of the individual. The idea behind is that the State is something sacrosanct and no limit can be set to its absolute supremacy. In the modern world the State idea dominates the thoughts and actions of humanity. It demands that the individual shall immolate himself to it and asserts that the hope of human welfare and human progress lies in its efficiency and organisation. In Sri Aurobindo's words, "the State idea is rushing forward... and is prepared to crush under its wheels everything that conflicts with its force." It makes a twofold appeal—one to the external interests of the race, the other to its highest moral tendencies. It is incumbent on us to make a careful examination and see if this appeal is admissible.

It is easy enough to understand that the State idea is one thing in theory, but quite another in practice. Theoretically, it is subordination of each person to the good of all; practically, each person is sacrificed to a collective egoism—political, military, economic—an egoism foisted on the State by a masterful individual or a masterful coterie. Whether the dominant coterie is hereditary or elected or comes to the top by its own cleverness, or by force of circumstances, matters little. This ruling class does not, in fact, represent the best minds or the highest aims of the nation. The modern politician nowhere stands for the soul of a people or its aspirations. Sri Aurobindo paints him in lurid, but very true colours:—"what he does usually represent is all the average pettiness, selfishness, egoism and self-deception that is about him and these he represents well enough as well as a great deal of mental incompetence and moral conventionality, timidity and pretence. High words and noble ideas are on his lips, but they become rapidly the clap-trap of a party". Such minds decide what the common weal is, such hands carry it out, to such persons is the individual expected to surrender his freedom of thought and action.

But even if the governing classes could be trained up to high aims and noble ideals as was done in some ancient communities, the State would not be what it claims to be. In actual practice, only that much of the intellect and power will be available for the administration of the State as its particular machinery will allow to come to the top, and possibly quite a lot of

folly and selfishness will also float up therewith. Possibly things being what they are, we cannot expect any better. But still, if the effort of the individual is less hampered, it will always help the group to move nearer to the true goal, the realisation of the common good. "It is this energy of the individual which is the really effective agent of collective progress." But it is clear that the modern world is tending towards an increase of State power, and towards the elimination of the essential corrective to the defects and drawbacks of that power. The organised State takes no account of the thought and energy of important minorities; if anything it suppresses them. "It is a collective egoism", says Sri Aurobindo, "much inferior to the best of which the community is capable". What that egoism can be in relation to other such egoisms we are seeing again and again. Its ugliness is growing greater still every day.

The State is not an organism, but a mere machine. In its dealings with other States, it is not hampered by any scruples. A "sacred egoism" is still the guiding force. It knows no restraint but the fear of defeat and an economic set-back. As to its inner life, the organised State has largely shed the brutality, intolerance and rapacity that marked its conduct. There has been much improvement of late. It feels the need of looking after the animal welfare of individuals and smaller aggregates. But that does not in any way justify its claim to absorb or subordinate all free activities of the individual. The swallowing up of individual thought and action by the State cannot be justified by the plea that its government is benign and humane. The idea is summed up beautifully by the sentence—"The State is a convenience, and a rather clumsy convenience, for our common development: it ought never to be made an end in itself."

Another claim of the State idea, that its supremacy ensures human progress, is equally untenable. What a State Government can do is to facilitate co-operative action of individuals and to remove obstacles in its path and there its utility ends. When it presumes to control co-operative action, it condemns itself.

The State being a soulless machine, its working is bound to be crude. It lacks the force, the harmonious and intelligently varied action which characterises an organism. Its tendency is to manufacture instead of helping free growth. This is amply exemplified in State-controlled education, which tends to become a routine, a lifeless system. No doubt it secures uniformity, but, as Sri Aurobindo says, uniformity is death, not life. A State culture and a State education are unnatural violences. Progress, growth, realisation of wider life give the greatest sense of happiness to the individual, and status, safety and comfort give it to the collectivity. Till the collectivity becomes a conscious soul, this must hold true. Therefore, it is very improbable that the State machinery would bring about a healthy unity of mankind, a World-State whatever be its form—a single empire or a federation. Still all the experience that man has gained in making and breaking and remaking his political and social institutions is very necessary.

To be continued

BOOKS in the BALANCE

IN THE MOTHER'S LIGHT—PART I

By RISHABHCHAND

(The Society for the Spiritual and Cultural Renaissance of Bharat, Madras. Price: Rs. 2-8-0)

Does the crystal-clear self-luminous light of the sun need another light to make it visible? The obvious answer would be a most emphatic No. The works of the Mother, especially *Prayers and Meditations of the Mother* and *Words of the Mother* are so simple, so direct and so intensely spiritual that on seeing such a book as Rishabhchand's, the first question that arises in one's mind is some such one as we have posed here. But that is only the first question, the initial human reaction and that is all. When we read through the pages, we are utterly absorbed not only in the many quotations from the Mother's writings, but also in the equally simple and direct expressions of the author; the turns of thought and the beautiful gold-links that are forged by the writer in the silent smithy of his psychic being serve as a luminous, but not at all a loud background, bringing out in relief the gorgeous lustre of the Mother's diamond words. And then once again we turn our eyes towards the above question. And the reply comes through the profundities of our being: The sun certainly does not need another light to reveal itself; but its light can surely fall on the ripples of a blithely flowing river or on the wind-scattered spray of a crystal waterfall. A writing that needs no commentary to yield its sense because it is so simple, may still have it brought out in a new beautiful way by something that is in tune with it. And 'in tune with it' are the very words that describe Rishabhchand's book in relation to the Mother's works.

In *the Mother's Light*, we read or hear the title and deep-seated memories awake and reverberate in the heart of one who has come into touch with the Mother at the Pondicherry Ashram. The Mother's Light is white, says Sri Aurobindo in one of his letters, and even a slight degree of spiritual receptivity is enough to show one that it is white. But white is not a denial of the other hues; it is not a monotone; on the contrary, it is a combination, a perfect synthesis of all the rainbow hues, rose of love and blue of devotion and red of illumined physical and yellow of intellect and violet of spirituality and gold of Supermind. And Rishabhchand's heart has become just those ripples of the blithely flowing river and that wind-scattered spray of the crystal water-fall in analysing the pan-chromatic white Light of the Mother's Prayers and Meditations and Words. As a matter of fact, it is not a mere analysis that he has attempted, but a dual or rather biune process of analysis and synthesis, which is the peculiar characteristic of the integral Yoga and of the writings dealing with it. Reason analyses and Intuition synthesises; but there is also an Intuition that works through Reason giving us a global view of the parts severed by the latter. It is this strange biune faculty that is brought to the fore and made active by the practice of the integral Yoga.

The Mother's Light is the Light of the integral Yoga and is therefore itself integral and integrating. Peace, Love, Self-surrender, Service of the Divine, Transformation of the entire lower nature, Manifestation of the Divine in Matter, Divine Union are some of the many component parts of that Light. All these components are first of all taken together in the first essay ('The Mother') of Rishabhchand's book, and then each one of them is separately dealt with in details in the subsequent essays. The first essay begins with the narrative of one of the earliest spiritual experiences of the Mother and the many implications deduced therefrom. About this experience the author writes that it was the prophetic dawn of the Mother's life whose blazing noon-tide is revealed in *Prayers and Meditations*. It also indicates the Mother's rôle here; her spirituality is not of the ascetic, world-shunning kind of the Advaita Vedantin, but she is here to become 'the Mediatrix between the supreme Transcendent above and the material world below'. Her whole being, from the summit soul down to the physical body, constantly aspires for and surrenders itself to the Divine. The Divine is her one all-consuming passion. But she does not seek the Divine for herself alone. Her aspiration is, as the author has nicely put, 'to realise an integral union with the integral Divine and become the conscious intermediary between Him and the material world, so that His unflawed manifestation may be possible in transformed human nature.'

The words 'manifestation' and 'transformation' have got a very special significance attached to them in Sri Aurobindo's and the Mother's Yoga, which is explained by the author in the ninth and eighth essays respectively. It is generally accepted that the world and all the objects contained in it are all a manifestation of the Divine. It is true, but it is not in this general sense that the word 'manifestation' is used in Aurobindonian literature. The material world is no doubt essentially a mode of the Spirit, but at the same time it is also its mask. Matter, it is said, is the opposite pole of the Spirit, its negation and denial in the evolutionary earth-life. Hence creation, although it can be called a manifestation of the Divine, is still its veil. Manifestation in its special sense means 'the self-revelation of the One in the Many in the conditions of material life', that is to say, 'the perfect deployment of the divine qualities of Light and Peace and Purity and Freedom in terrestrial life.' This Manifestation of the Divine, the author says, is the very meaning and purpose of the creation of the world. The progressive self-manifestation of the Divine took the first form of life in Matter, and the next step was the evolution of Mind in living Matter;

but the climax will come only when the Divine Consciousness and the Divine Force will manifest themselves in their plenitude in the mentalised living Matter. This is the goal towards which all the strivings of man are consciously or unconsciously directed. Without that goal 'life would be a barren buffet against the tide of Time and the blockade of material circumstances' (P. 152). 'Life can have no sense, no justification for continuing, if it cannot be a manifesting channel of Light'.

This, then, is the fundamental concept of the whole book, viz., the Manifestation of the Divine in Matter; and that is the goal of human life. In the essay on 'The Goal of Human Life', this idea is developed in detail. The author divides mankind into four categories. The first three are: (1) those men who never think of any goal, but drift aimlessly from moment to moment; (2) those who are seeking for a goal but have not yet found it; (3) those who have glimpsed some goal and are advancing towards it, slowly or swiftly according to their capacity. Idealism, selfless service of society or country or humanity, spreading of truths, etc. are all included among the aims of the third kind of men. At its highest, the glimpsed goal assumes the shape of the realisation of the Self or Brahman or the Divine, the liberation of the individual soul or the attainment of the supreme Knowledge or Truth or Bliss. But there are some men, some exceptional souls of a fourth kind. They want the highest possible perfection and fulfilment in this life and here. It is these who show us the real goal towards which the whole mankind is moving. Nature, in the course of evolution she has been following so far, commenced from the Inconscient and, passing through the stages of Matter that is inert, Life that is dynamic and Mind that is groping in Ignorance towards some Light, she has so far been able to build up individuality and is trying to perfect it. But the perfection of the individual can come only when he has become not only the universal individual but also the transcendent individual. As the author has put it, he 'has to combine in himself, the transcendent, the universal and the individual'. Man is destined to be 'the golden crown of the evolutionary Nature' by becoming 'the most complete and creative embodiment of the descending Love, Light and beatific Force of Sachchidananda upon earth.' This is the goal towards which the Mother wants us to advance; this is the Goal of all goals.

But if this be the goal of human life, then it cannot be a separate isolated thing, for the individual must have universalised and transcendentalised himself before he could arrive at it. And that means that human destiny is inextricably mixed up with the destiny of the whole earth. The universalisation of the individual means his identification with the whole earth; and his transcendentalisation means his identification with the supreme, transcendent Divine. This is the double identification spoken of by the author in his essay, 'The Earth and her Destiny'. The identification of the Mother's being, on one side, with the Earth and, on the other, with the Divine, is very clearly brought out by the author, who has brought together in this essay many a marvellous passage from her *Prayers*. This double identification, says he, is the secret of the Mother's mission on earth. But even that is not enough to ensure an easy accomplishment of her work, because of the stark resistance of Matter. The long-established habits of Nature oppose the double movement of liberation and transformation. But still the tremendous work has got to be done and, as the author has beautifully said, 'Matter has to be churned and delivered of the Spirit it holds imprisoned in itself and darkness has to be lashed into Light.' Whatever the difficulties, this destiny is inevitable for the Earth and the evolution of the Supramental race of men and the establishment of the Life Divine will be the ultimate reward of all the miseries and turmoil she is undergoing at present. This is the promise the Divine has given to the Mother.

But, however inevitable this destiny may be, it will not be fulfilled as if it were a miracle. Man must become ready to be able to bear the Divine Descent. And what are the means by which such a Divine Manifestation can be brought about? The author has replied to this question in the essay on 'The Mother', and in many other essays following it. The first means is Love, not human love but the 'dynamic and creative divine Love, instinct with the supreme Knowledge and the supreme Power'. The distinction between the human, the psychic and the Divine Love is very clearly given in the essay on 'Love'. The second means is 'an ungrudging, unreserved and loving surrender to the Divine through action'. Such a surrender removes all difficulties and obstacles and cuts asunder the knots of the ego and desires. It makes the ground clear for the Divine Will and the Divine Consciousness to take complete possession of our whole being and become dynamic in it. How such an integral self-surrender can be made and what will be its result is given by the author in the essay on 'Self-surrender'.

Over and above these two means, viz. Love and Self-surrender, there are certain other spiritual requirements essential for an integral divinisation of the human being. First among them is peace. It is peace that is the firm foundation for any spiritual achievements. It must be a settled peace in one's entire being. In one of the most beautiful of the Mother's Prayers, she says, 'In Peace and Silence, the Eternal manifests Himself; allow no-

Continued on page 11

BOOKS in the BALANCE—Continued from previous page.

thing to disturb you and the Eternal will manifest; have perfect equality in face of all and the Eternal will be there'. The author has quoted the following from Sri Aurobindo's *Bases of Yoga*: "The first thing to do in the sadhana is to get a settled peace and silence in the mind. . . . To feel the peace above and about your head is a first step; you have to get connected with it and it must descend into you and fill your mind, life and body and surround you, so that you live in it—for this peace is the one sign of the Divine's presence with you."

The next quality is the Service of the Divine. Like the word 'manifestation', as we have seen above, and the word 'transformation', as we shall see a little later, the word 'service' also has got a special sense in the Mother's philosophy. 'By true service the Mother means the service of the Divine with the will of the servant in perfect tune with the Will of the Master, and the whole being of the servant, surrendered and integrated, moved by the omniscient divine Force.' The Divine Force is using the instrumental being of the liberated individual for its own purpose of perfecting the terrestrial existence. As is finely put by the author, the will of the eternal Doer functions through the co-operating will of the apparent doer, viz. the liberated individual. The latter is at once the receiver and the giver, receiving from the Transcendent above and giving what he receives to the Immanent within and around him. This divine commerce between the Transcendent and the Immanent, through the medium of the surrendered individual is what the Mother means by true service. Knowledge must be sought not for its own sake but for the sake of the service of the Divine. In one prayer the Mother says, 'O Lord, my sole aspiration is to know Thee better and serve Thee better every day. . . . I am more and more intensely interested in the only thing which appears to me important: to know Thee better in order to serve Thee better.'

All the above means are all right in their proper places, but if the end of evolution is the perfect manifestation of the Divine here on earth and in material life, then transformation of human nature is the principal means of achieving it. And what is this transformation? It is not simply a purification of the unregenerate animal propensities that are there in the being of man. Nor is it a moral or ethical control of these undesirable

elements in human nature. For the ethical or moral element in the human mind, however high it may be, is still only a portion of the mind, and a mental rule or principle cannot bring about the radical conversion we seek nor the Manifestation of the Divine in man and on earth. Following the Master, Sri Aurobindo, the author has outlined the triple transformation,—the psychic, the spiritual and the supramental,—which alone can effectuate the next step in the terrestrial evolution, viz. the Manifestation of the Godhead on earth and the establishment thereon of the race of gnostic, supramental beings. The first stage of this great transmutation is an increasing emergence of the psychic being or the real soul within man and its gradually becoming the master of his mind, life and body. This is known as psychicisation or psychic transformation. The second stage is marked by an ascent of the psychicised consciousness into the universal Self and its participation in the vastnesses of the cosmic movements. This is the middle stage, known as the spiritual transformation. But the third, the supramental transformation, is the crown and summit of the whole long process. In this stage there is an ascent into the Supermind which is the Truth-Consciousness, and then a succession of descents of the Supramental Light and Force into the human nature in order to make it perfect. All these things and many others are dealt with by the author in the essay on 'Transformation'.

The last essay of the book is on the subject of 'Divine Union'. This essay too is characterised by the same integral outlook which we find throughout the whole book. Even the union with the Divine must be integral and not partial. There are as many kinds of union with the Divine as there are mystics in the world. But the union that is integral is not one that is realised only at the heights of our being and consciousness, but in every part down to the most physical constituent of our being. As memorably put by the author, 'Not union with the Divine in the soul alone, not in the soul, mind and heart alone, but a union, a constant, dynamic, honey-dripping, life-transforming union even in the physical being, even in the cells of the body—a complete and creative union between the Summit and Base—has been the labour of the Mother, not for herself alone, but for mankind.'

RAJANIKANT MODY.

Clouds

White towers uphold the Wisdom of the skies
And glide with swan-like grace upon the blue
Wide forehead of eternity—to rise
Like fairy castles—magic-made yet true:
As tides of light glimpsed in a searching mind,
Or soul-swept visions of a sudden bliss
That flood the chambers of the heart to find
In Nature's smile there thrills an inner kiss.
While sunlight will entice the bud to flower,
Often do these breath-taking peaks recall
The light and shade that trace a mortal hour:
The human epic shadowed on a wall.
These sun-kissed hills of silence can amaze
The soul to grandeur 'neath the Azure's gaze.

NORMAN DOWSETT

Flower Signifying "The Supramental Sun"

O thou Sun's marvel flower-flame,
Vibrant with remote passion of gold,
Blossoming on the dark branches of sleep
Like a luminous crown on the brow of death—
A crystal effulgence on the heart of time.
Thou, the bright orb petalled with fire,
Reveal to my soul the vast unspanned
Splendours of an unhorizoned sea;
Crossing myriad worlds of hue and tone,
Magic realms starred with limitless peace,
Reach the godhead's eagle altitudes—
The glorious majesty of his naked noon.

ROMEN

MYSTICISM AND SCIENCE—Continued from page 12

The Nature of Spiritual Reality

The spiritual reality that is the object of mysticism has three fundamental faces, so to speak. To begin with, it is an absolute permanence within and beyond our world of change, an infinite silence and eternal rest, the God who is the impersonal Ground of the soul and the universe—called the supreme Self or the supreme Non-Self according as we proceed by way of assertion or by way of negation. Next, it is the divine Personal or, rather, Super-personal Being, omniscient, omnipotent, omnipresent, at once the Lord, Container and Indweller of both soul and universe, with whom we can have a varied intimate relation and communion. Then, finally, it is the dynamic Life of life, the manifesting Will, the inspiring Energy by which a full and zealous living out of our possibilities is achieved and by which a process of transformation of our nature is set up and intense divine action initiated. These three fundamental faces may be regarded as a sort of triune invariant experienced by all mystics. But they are diversely arranged and ordered and stressed when a mental scheme is drawn up; also, the particular turn of one's temperament may occasion the manner in which they are experienced and determine the emphasis.

If a poise clean beyond the mind is consciously taken with an assured wide-awake transcendence of mental values and temperamental slants, the three-faced spiritual reality may be seized in its harmonious integrality as is done, with an immense extension of its usual meaning and effect, by Sri Aurobindo who calls that transcendent poise the Supermind, the Truth-consciousness, *Vijnana* or Gnosis. Otherwise, a certain inequality of stress between the three faces must remain—and is even necessary in order that a many-sided development may take place by there being, together with a move towards centralisation and harmonisation, a pursuit of each face to its exclusive ultimate. Again, whether in the mental or the supramental poise, there must be no rigid unification. To quote Sri Aurobindo: "Spiritual truth is a truth of the Infinite, one in an infinite diversity, and it can assume an infinite variety of aspects and formations. . . . This many-sidedness is the sign of the approach of the soul to a living reality, not to an abstraction or a constructed figure of things that can be petrified into a dead or stony formula."

So much for Mr. Jagjit Singh's general misconceptions about mysticism. We have now to look at his particular misconceptions about science.

To be concluded

MYSTICISM AND SCIENCE—(I)

By K. D. SETHNA

Mr. Jagjit Singh has been kind enough to take notice, in the *National Herald*, of my paper entitled *Mysticism and Einstein's Relativity Physics*. His review is critical throughout. This is not unexpected since he has a penchant for Dialectical Materialism while I have spent years in my own poor way trying to live in the light of the supra-intellectual experience that is Sri Aurobindo's. But we must not forget that mysticism need be no enemy of intellectual statement and exposition, though, of course, they cannot be quite commensurate with all its depth beyond depth. In India the greatest philosophers—Sankara, Ramanuja, Madhwa, Vallabha—were mystics, and Sri Aurobindo the Master Yogi of our times is also a philosopher *par excellence*. For, mysticism is not just a supernormal way of feeling: it is, in addition, a supernormal way of knowing as well as seeing and it is all these because it is primarily a supernormal way of being. A follower, however humble, of a mystic like Sri Aurobindo is, therefore, not unlikely to build a structure of thought whenever he attempts either to express his mystical experience of any kind or to bring his sense of the mystical to any other activity of the human consciousness—say, art or science. What my reviewer has failed to take cognisance of is precisely the structure of thought in my paper. That, and not his critical attitude to my standpoint, is the head and front of his offence in my eyes.

I sent my paper to him for consideration because his articles in the *National Herald* had given me the impression that he does not pass summary judgments: I have enjoyed his articles for their close pursuit of various lines of thought before evaluating them and approving or disapproving. It was my hope to test the intellectual structure of my thesis against a mind which I knew would be out of tune with my own but which I also knew to be acute in understanding. My hope has been dashed. Mr. Jagjit Singh for once has condemned out of hand whatever I had to say, as if there were not the slightest movement of grey matter in it. This is an injustice to me and also to his own usually perceptive self—an injustice increased by his trotting out against my thesis conventional and superficial arguments setting science and mysticism at absolute loggerheads.

Mystical Experience and its Verification

He begins by accepting the hoary fallacy which I have already pointed out—namely, that mystical experience is not at all intellectually formulable and has never been intellectually formulated. No doubt, an ineffableness remains after all such formulation, but this ineffableness is analogous at the upper pole to the ineffableness we realise to be in the concrete physical universe that the intellectual formulas of science try to chart out with their neat definition. The infinite and eternal Spirit, which the mystics are after, escapes the abstracting and discursive mind by being inexhaustible and concrete just as in its own way does the world which we live in and which science studies. But exactly like that world it too admits of not only an intellectual formulation but also a passage from that formulation to experimental verification. The various schools of Yoga teach us how to verify it and it is no argument against verification to say that mystical experience is "possible to a rather rare group of specially gifted individuals."

The argument, as stated, is somewhat mistaken in its very terms, for though we may speak of a Sri Krishna or a Sri Ramakrishna or a Sri Aurobindo as specially gifted individuals the mysticism they bring is meant for the common man and not solely for geniuses. The vast number of people who practise *sadhana* are not individuals enjoying special gifts of nature: they are ordinary sincere folk with a clear call in their hearts to pursue the Divine—they are of the same human quality as those who form the bulk of scientific students and they arrive at their goal by the same sort of self-dedication and the same type of concentrated energy, however differently the dedication may be directed and the energy orientated. If their number is smaller, that is mostly because the goal they strive for is at first sight more remote than any other from common concerns, but the comparative remoteness of the goal does not in itself prove the strivers specially gifted any more than is one who walks to a place a hundred miles away instead of walking the same length by going round and round in one place.

Even if we say that since a mystic's is a rarer calling than any other he must be a specially gifted individual, the point still stands about the verifiability of his experience. The essence of verification is surely not that all should be able at any time to verify a result but that whoever follows a certain discipline should be able to do so. Absence of immediately universal verifiability may restrict the race's experience of a truth, it does not show the truth to be non-existent or unverified. In fact, there is no scientific truth which every man on the earth, exactly as he is at present mentally and physically, can verify: to the extent to which it remains unverified by

all it does not become a falsehood. Between a scientific truth and a mystical truth, the difference is merely in the number of people who go through the process of verification and not in any essential feature: a mystical truth is not less concrete, more elusive of expression, less amenable to experimental knowledge. It is naturally different in its concreteness, its expressive terms, its experimental modes; but that is simply because it is a spiritual truth and not a material one. Unless we start with the dogmatic assertion that there can only be material truth, I do not see how we can hold mysticism to be either incommunicable or unverifiable.

"Objective" and "Invariant"

We must not allow ourselves to be impressed by Mr. Jagjit Singh's pro-science statement that scientific theories unlike mystical experience can show their validity by objective criteria. The word "objective" is rather ticklish. If it means "common to all people" we have already dealt with the point and found it to be of no essential importance. If it means "material" or "physical" the statement can derive cogency only by the dogmatism to which we have already drawn attention. Besides, the opposition between "objective" and "subjective" has to be carefully weighed. Whatever be the case with a supreme Being's consciousness, our ordinary mind, with its initial incapacity in face of the universe and its acquisition—except rarely—of a laboriously built knowledge and controlling power, is evidently not the creator of things. Things have their reality by what is within them and independent of our mind's interpretation. But the knowledge we build up is necessarily a matter of consciousness and it is through and within consciousness that all reality is confronted and evaluated. In this sense everything is subjective, and a particular activity of consciousness with its use of our normal means of perception cannot limit the range of the objective. There can be many species of objectivities—physical, non-physical, supra-physical—each compassed by means of perception suitable and proper to it and no objectivity can be depreciated because the means of perceiving it happen to be ordinarily labelled as "inner" or "subjective". Conversely, for all purposes of knowledge the material world can be defined as physically subjective, while other things are non-physically or supra-physically so. What we may further say about the material world is that it is something which many consciousnesses share and hence it may be termed inter-subjective. By being inter-subjective it may lend itself to a certain treatment which synthesises differing physical experiences and produces an "invariant"—in other words, a view which brings together the features of many views and produces out of them a factor of general agreement.

Mr. Jagjit Singh makes some play also with the word "invariant." He writes: "There may be various types of mysticism, e.g., the logical mysticism of a Wittgenstein, the religious mysticism of Sri Aurobindo, the poetical mysticism of a Blake or a Tagore, and the scientific mysticism of an Eddington, etc. All these different mystical experiences claim to give us a view of or an 'insight' into 'reality', whatever that may mean. Now if it is claimed that all these differing mystical views of 'reality' are different because they represent different facets of the same 'reality', then the mystic is under obligation to produce an 'invariant' or a 'synthesis' of these different views which could be taken as *the* view of reality. But no such 'invariant' of the various mystical experiences has ever been given or could be given. And, of course, no mystic would ever accept any such obligation, being a law unto himself!"

To answer this passage we may begin with the remark that there may be various types of scientism also, e.g. the dialectical materialist scientism of Vavilov and Mitin, the logical positivist scientism of Bohr and Heisenberg, the metaphysical relativist scientism of Einstein, the realist interpretative scientism of Planck, the epistemological selectivist scientism of Eddington, etc. All these scientific outlooks claim to give us a correct perspective of "fact", whatever that may mean. But how are we to find a properly significant "invariant" for all of them? Besides, physics has two branches—the macroscopic and the microscopic—and they are ruled by entirely different fundamental concepts: the former goes by absolute continuity and determinacy, the latter by intrinsic discontinuity and indeterminacy, and though Einstein has recently propounded a unified theory it is impossible to say at present whether it will stand or whether it will collapse like all other attempts, including his own previous ones, at unification. So there is in the science of physics, which is the basic science, not only a wide dissimilarity of perspectives but also, between the two parts of it, a serious disparity which most scientists except Einstein consider as good as irremovable. What chance is there then of striking upon a reliable meaningful invariant? A merely tentative or working invariant is the sole one we can hope for in ultimate scientific matters. Surely an atleast as satisfactory invariant can be found in ultimate mystical matters.

Continued on page 11