

# MOTHER INDIA

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"GREAT IS TRUTH AND IT SHALL PREVAIL"

ALTERNATE SATURDAYS

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## THE CHINESE DRAGON THE FOLLY OF THE U.N. RETREAT IN KOREA By "LIBRA"

During the suspension of "Mother India" for a month and a half after the passing of Sri Aurobindo, the following trenchant article was published under a different title in the Delhi weekly, "Thought", on January 5. With acknowledgements to that magazine we are reproducing the still timely message of the article in a somewhat changed form. Certain sentences omitted because of space-limitations are restored, a few significant alterations have been introduced by the author and, in view of recent events, important new matter has been added by him.

To be or not to be at war with Red China is the question that for quite a long while caused puckered brows in the councils of the U. S. A. More than two months ago, General MacArthur spotted an increasing number of Chinese troops fighting shoulder to shoulder with the North Koreans in the vicinity of the Yalu River. But there was no call by the American Government to the free world to brand Mao as an aggressor. Diplomatic heads shook this way and that, without arriving at a definite decision. Then an overwhelming horde of Chinese soldiery bore down on the U. N. Forces and threatened MacArthur with a complete rout. President Truman rose to the occasion and demanded that Red China be internationally condemned: it even seemed as if, in case the U. N. failed, he would proceed independently in sheer self-defence to attack Manchuria with every weapon necessary—the Atom Bomb included.

At this moment, Premier Attlee of England intervened and pleaded that America's action against China would precipitate World War III and, for the sake of out-of-the-way Korea, bring the Russians rolling across Western Europe and pulverising England herself with an atomic assault. Truman was reined back, with the highly ironic result that a huge withdrawal commenced in Korea of one of the mightiest military powers in the world under the command of one of the greatest living generals. England and Western Europe heaved a sigh of relief: they said that mankind had been saved from a cataclysm and also that the wholesale pulling out of the G.I.'s and other U.N. armies from occupied regions constituted no appeasement of aggressive Communism so long as there was no surrendering of Korea to the Reds without a fight. The first statement is pretty dubious and the second, for all its bravery, is rather fatuous; but America herself appears to have been easily persuaded into a fighting retreat. What is the cause of this swing away from the determination and the drive that had once characterised her action?

There is, on her part, hardly any paltering where Russian and Chinese Communism is concerned. Her vision of the mind and face of this Communism is quite unclouded, nor is the least attempt made to buy off Mao by presenting him with Formosa and a seat in the Security Council. But a mixture of certain obscure feelings is perceptible to any keen observer of the general American consciousness—a mixture that, even apart from consideration of the safety of England and Western Europe, interferes with action along correct lines. There is a kind of mythic sense of China as a vast, sullen, brooding mass of endless humanity emerging from the dawn of time and persisting unconquerable through the ages. Out of this sense arise a number of vague conclusions. First, it is not good luck to molest the sprawling old giant. Second, it is dangerous to get involved with an immense population of 475 millions, an almost interminable man-power holding life unthinkable cheap. Third, so ancient a race has a phenomenal stamina against which modern nations with their comparatively flashy histories cannot stand for long. Especially the American mentality, with its roots not going beyond a few experimental centuries and its eagerness for quick results, seems on the surface to be the least fitted for waging war on such a race. Hence the U.S.A.'s reluctance for nearly a month to think even of naming Red China's intervention in Korea an act of aggression. America does not shirk war with Communism, but if she can put off the day of tackling China she will hardly be sorry. Fortunately an opposite species of mind is also at work—what we may call the MacArthur mind—which does not let the back-look, so to speak, on historical China remain quite dominant. But a degree of hesitation seems to have been a constant impediment and may, particularly under the pressure of arguments *à la* Attlee, prove dangerous if the eyes are not fixed on the contemporary Chinese scene rather than on past history.

Before we point out the features of this scene we may dispose of an argument which spokesmen of the Indian Government have built up to demonstrate the wisdom of India's warning to the U.N. at the time the 38th Parallel was crossed. America is told: "Had you not turned a deaf ear to our warning that China would take a hand in the Korean scramble if you pressed the attack into North Korea, you would have avoided the unpleasant situation of fighting Chinese troops. We were the only sober voice in the democratic world and we were not heeded." The argument seems weighty at first but a little scrutiny shows it to be straw-stuffed. To begin with, we did nothing apocalyptic in pointing out the possibility of Chinese intervention, the risk of being faced with Mao's troops. In fact, Mr. George Kennan, the U.S. State Department's former top policy planner, kept consistently advising that the Parallel should not be crossed lest it should provoke Red China. The American Government was well aware of the likelihood of Mao coming to Kim Il-sung's aid. But there were two questions. One was: Would he take any measures which would be really effective? As no aid could be really effective without his being shown to have openly put his finger into the pie, the crucial question was the other: Would he expose himself as aggressor? If the answer could be "Yes", then there would be world war. So everything depended on whether Mao was prepared for a global clash. Those who favoured the crossing of the Parallel were of the opinion that he would not make it the occasion to throw the brand which would set all earth ablaze. And what has happened bears them out, though at the same time we must admit that effective aid has been given. This is a bit of a paradox which must be understood before judgment is passed on the crossing. Effective aid has been given only because, contrary to expectation, the U.N. proved morally too weak to cope with the sinuous tactics of the Chinese dragon. Mao, from the start, has officially declared that the Chinese who are fighting in Korea are not Red regulars but only volunteers. That is to say, he is anxious not to commit his country and to lay himself open to the charge of aggression which would directly set him at loggerheads with Truman and the leaders of fifty-three nations. So, while America and her allies have permitted him to get away with his subterfuge and have thereby suffered a terrible jolt, their reading of his mind must be confessed to have been essentially correct.

It may be urged: "This is cold comfort and, though technically China has not even intervened, the 'volunteers' are enough of a steadily growing evil which has materialised precisely because the U.N. Forces did not confine themselves to South Korea. What has been gained by providing China with an excuse to start a free flow of 'volunteers'?" The answer is that the U.N. Forces would not have been, on the whole, better off without carrying the war into the enemy's country. If North Korea had not been entered, Kim Il-sung's broken army would have been rebuilt thoroughly with Chinese and Russian help and very soon there would have been a second attack designed to drive MacArthur's men out of South Korea. The Chinese "volunteers" have not rushed across the Yalu merely to defend the hydroelectric installations: their openly avowed aim has been to clear all Korea of the Americans and this aim they could have more efficiently pursued if the 38th Parallel had remained uncrossed by the latter. After the crossing there was a crop of difficulties for China, for MacArthur was close to the Manchurian border and might with ease demolish the entire power plant and cripple the industries of Manchuria. He might, if necessary, even attack by air deep into Chinese territory. Determined swarming over North Korea considerably advanced the democratic cause, as indeed must all determined steps to check Communist violence and self-aggrandisement. In fact, this swarming drove Mao to a critical fork in his way: he would have to drop, if the U.N. applied pressure, the hoax of

## THE CHINESE DRAGON —Continued from page 1

"volunteer" help and either take the road of a world war he could not exactly be in love with or else move towards a future in which an established non-Communist Korea would be felt by him like a permanent thorn in the side of China.

Yes, it was a mistake to advise MacArthur to go soft when he came to the 38th Parallel. America's failure to take advantage of proximity to Manchuria does not change the essential complexion of the case. It only proves that now America herself has committed a mistake. Hard hitting has paid throughout the Korean campaign and when the problem of actual war with China arose from across the Yalu the right course was still to go on hitting hard and take all risks of an earth-wide armagaddon rather than give the slightest ground to the strategists of Moscow and Peking. Further pursuit of the fearless line of action adopted so far should not have been hampered by those vague conclusions born of a semi-superstitious backlook on historical China. Here the point to remember is that the China which is hand in glove with Soviet Russia has broken with her own past. The hoary country of Lao-tse and Confucius and Mencius, the national consciousness subtly steeped in the sense of eternal Tao or timeless Nirvana or ancestral Father Heaven, the spiritual half-brother of undying India of the Avatars and the Rishis and the Bhaktas—that China whose enormous spaces and teeming multitudes, like those of India, had something of the Infinite about them and who carried in her life down the millenniums a touch of the perennial Spirit's persistence is there no longer or is at least thrust into the remote background and shows us no more her awe-inspiring cryptic face. What confronts us today is the very opposite of this strange half-sleeping giant of the ages who could never be trampled down. Communist China is a noisy upstart at odds with the ancient soul of the country. Her Marxist slogans have nothing of the *mantra's* potency, her guns are devoid of the celestial fire and her tanks do not roll out of the Ineffable's mystery. The frightful countenance she wears comes of no supernatural fury: it is just the ugliness of a cunning brute desiring to stamp a blind heel upon the visionary heart of evolving man. Formidable, no doubt, is this ugliness, but it carries in its own mindless materialism the doom of all things that fight against the growing Godhead in free humanity. She can be crushed and must be crushed without the least fear the moment she tries to encroach on her neighbours and to pierce the defences of democracy.

The query, then, about being or not being at war with Mao was to be met in a forthright manner. The talk about China doubting whether her interests would be safeguarded by the duly authorised action in Korea should have been dropped for good. China had had the fullest assurances possible. The General Assembly of the U.N. adopted as far back as October 7 a resolution declaring that its troops would not stay in Korea longer than necessary to achieve the goals of peace and unification. Again, the General Assembly's Interim Committee on Korea proclaimed on November 7 that the Korean-Manchurian border would be fully respected by the forces of the United Nations. Three days later the Security Council saw the six-power resolution introduced, which gave once more the assurance that the Chinese frontier with Korea would be held inviolate and which carried a pledge implying protection of China's interests in the power grid this side the Yalu River. In face of these promises which more than forty nations had underwritten it was absurd to concede that China might be intervening in Korea out of sheer apprehension about loss of electricity for her own industrial concerns. The intervention was part of a plan to set Kim Il-sung again on his feet and bog down as many of the U.N.'s men and machines as possible in Korea. The reason why the direct military form the intervention has taken came not as soon as the Parallel was crossed but only when the Manchurian frontier was approached seems to be that Mao never calculated on the crossing and was taken by surprise that the U.N. failed to be fools: he had not made sufficient arrangements. The idea that he was simply perturbed about the Yalu installations should have been dismissed. Next, the sham of Chinese intervention being merely the action of "volunteers" ought to have been resolutely exposed. The *New York Times* aptly remarked at the moment, over a month back, when President Truman appeared to be poised for attack: "It should be fairly obvious that tanks don't volunteer. Honest Chinese farmers don't just happen to keep a supply of jet planes in their back yards so as to be able to rush to the 'defence' of their Korean brethren." Moreover, if only "volunteers" were acting and the Red Government was unconnected with them, why was it permitting their planes not only to attack American troops, supply columns and air-bases but also to retreat across the Yalu into what MacArthur called the "privileged sanctuary" of Manchuria? Surely the Manchurian airstrips were not the property of private citizens who had "volunteered" to liberate Korea from the U.N. Forces. The Red Government was clearly visible in every move of these self-styled liberators. And it should have been forced to accept its responsibility so that no choice might have remained to it except total withdrawal or full-fledged war resulting in the destruction of Chinese industry by mammoth air-raids—especially the utter devastation of Manchuria which has 65 per cent of China's oil reserves, 90 per cent of her steel production, 50 per cent of her coal production and 75 per cent of her electric power—Manchuria where lie most of Mao's aspirations to make China a modern powerful state. Unless the fateful choice was imposed on Mao the situation in Korea was bound to go on worsening and completely defeat the purposes to which the U.N. were pledged.

Of course, we must not overlook the fine courage of the decision to make a fighting retreat rather than write off Korea. The Americans who are bearing the brunt of the battle deserve ample praise. To them goes also the credit for convincing the world that Truman will never surrender but will keep hammering away in even far-off corners of the world which

seem non-vital to America's safety. Doubtless, what is being done is heroic, but is it sufficiently practical to stem the Red advance over Asia? Will it accomplish even the limited objective its strategy aims at in the Korean peninsula? The objective is threefold: (1) to inflict major losses on the enemy while holding the U.N. losses to the minimum; (2) to hamper fresh commitments by Red China in the rest of Asia by pinning down Lin Piao's Fourth Field Army which is the best-trained Chinese force and much of which is already deployed in Korea; (3) to win time for the clear formulation of U.N. political policy and for the development of America's own military rearmament programme. The success of this objective can be ensured only if, at the end of delaying tactics all along the line of retreat, a secure stand can be made for a long time within a semi-circle of defence around the port of Pusan. Naval gunfire and air power may help immensely; but will the last-ditch resistance be possible without violating the condition on which alone it has been planned—namely, that too heavy casualties should not be suffered by MacArthur's men? The answer to this question cannot be a prompt "Yes."

Even if it can be such a "Yes" and if sizable Chinese forces of the best type are engaged and increasingly chopped up, Korea will be as good as lost. A tiny perimeter held for long in the south-east cannot compensate for the passing of most of the peninsula into Communist hands. What the U.N. originally set out to do will fall quite short of achievement. And neither diplomatic nor economic sanctions such as America wants the U.N. to enforce will help much; for smuggling on a vast scale will go on, especially through Portuguese Macao. But these sanctions are themselves a measure which certain prominent nations in the East as well as the West will never dare to support; so even their moral effect cannot come about. As an alternative, to hope for an honourable cease-fire when there is no compulsion on Mao to accept it is to wait for the moon to fall into our lap. Finally, the very prospects of hindering Red China from fresh military adventures in Asia are scarcely bright. New troops can be trained and the old ones are not altogether insufficient for sallies in Indo-China and other adjoining regions. The U.N.'s retreating strategy can only be of limited use. And, all things considered, the Chinese cannot but look on it as an extremely gratifying though indirect appeasement of their power. The folly of it is therefore patent.

Never to allow the Reds to steal a march anywhere on the democracies or to get the better of them by means of any subterfuge—such should be the continual policy of the countries headed by the U.S.A. If the Reds commit the slightest aggression—as they are likely now to do in Indo-China and elsewhere—they must be boldly countered and the full consequence of their crime brought home to them. And this applies not only to Mao's China. There is no doubt that if Mao is engaged in a fight with the Western democracies Stalin will keep him supplied with arms and technical aid in order to enable the huge man-power of China to carry on a war of attrition with America and thus cripple America's capacity to stand up against Stalin's manoeuvres in the European theatre or in the Middle East. President Truman should see to it that in case China is at open war with him Russia is not permitted to get away with an insidious neutrality. Otherwise the power which he possesses to smash Mao will never bear final fruit. Under the recent treaty Stalin is obliged to succour Mao, but he will do his utmost to wriggle out of the awkwardness of getting branded explicitly as the accomplice of an aggressor. He will be Mao's mainstay throughout and yet on the pretext that until he sends his own troops against America he cannot be regarded as being in conflict with this country he will endeavour to keep his own production centres safe from American bombers. To let those centres remain intact is, for the U.S.A., to court suicide. President Truman must plainly tell Stalin that as soon as Mao is considered by him to be out in the arena, not a minute longer than it suits American needs will he look upon Russia as a neutral. Stalin is not ready for a world war—the whole Peace Campaign set afoot by him through the instrumentality of the Stockholm Appeal, with the intention to create both psychological and physical resistance within the democracies to the use of America's far superior atomic stockpile, shows the unreadiness. Hence it is distinctly to America's advantage to prevent Russia from trying to bleed her white in the Asian theatre through a China endlessly supplied from behind and yet herself escaping air bombardment and destruction at the hands of the West. If Stalin is made aware in unequivocal language that this advantage will be fearlessly pressed he will think a dozen times before egging Mao on to a major clash with the U. N. Forces. If America had been firm in Korea, then through the cautious loop-hole of the "volunteer"-myth the Chinese dragon would have pulled in its claws. Unyielding firmness is the need of the hour. Never by any other means—least of all by propitiation or concession—will the Communists, at present, either be restrained from annexing scattered vulnerable regions and thereby strengthening their position for a future tussle with America, or else be compelled to fight a world war on terms not of their own choosing.

It is not too late for America to return to the wonderful inspiration with which she plunged—prepared for all eventualities—into the Korean *mêlée* for the safety of civilisation. That inspiration alone is the free world's hope for peace without dishonour and without loss of its cherished ideals and values.

### ANNOUNCEMENT

The next issue of "Mother India" will be the Special Anniversary Number, dated February 21—with important articles by writers both Indian and foreign.



# 'WE PUT FREEDOM FIRST'

ISSUED BY THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF THE CONGRESS FOR CULTURAL FREEDOM:  
IRVING BROWN, ARTHUR KOESTLER, DAVID ROUSSET, CARLO SCHMID, IGNAZIO SILONE

On the very day the Communists invaded South Korea, June 25, 1950, some of the finest minds of the Western world met in Berlin to deliberate on the central problem facing mankind today: the fate of freedom. Out of their intense discussions these intellectual fighters for liberty fashioned a world-wide movement—the Congress for Cultural Freedom. The very names of the Honorary Chairmen bespeak the brilliance and the force behind the movement: Bertrand Russell (Great Britain), Jacques Maritain (France), John Dewey (U.S. A.), Benedetto Croce (Italy), Karl Jaspers (Germany). And the manifesto issued by the Congress is a memorable international testament against totalitarianism. In the wake of it comes the following equally momentous document which poses and answers, in specific terms, the questions that the common thinking man often asks in the midst of the confusion spread by Communist propaganda.

First and foremost, we want our civilization to survive. Two conditions are essential for its survival: freedom and peace.

We have put freedom first because peace is a function of freedom. A nation enslaved can at any time be whipped by its leaders into war hysteria and aggression. By isolating countries behind an Iron Curtain or a Chinese Wall, totalitarian governments can preach pacifism to foreign peoples, and world conquest to their own.

Nations wax the more aggressive and bellicose, the more they are deprived of freedom. The threat to peace came successively from countries in various degrees of enslavement: militarist Prussia, Fascist Italy, Nazi Germany, Japan, Soviet Russia. Each of these countries made, during the present century, successive bids for world conquest in the name of some ideology or secular religion. Each promised some form of Thousand-Year Reich or social paradise as a distant aim. Each time, the professed aim served as a cloak for wars of conquest. Each time, millions of well-meaning people were led to their destruction in the name of a phantom.

Communism in its present form has become a phantom ideology. It has as little to do with Socialism as the medieval Inquisition and the reign of the Borgias with the teachings of Christ. Our civilization can be saved if only the hypnotic power of this phantom is broken. This is not a task which any political party or group can achieve alone. It is an operation Mental Hygiene which can be accomplished only by a joint effort of the educated classes—of the men in public life, in the arts and letters, in the universities and elementary schools, in the laboratories and editorial offices, in the trade unions and professional organizations—who determine the intellectual climate of the nation.

The task which the Congress for Cultural Freedom and the Friends of Liberty have set for themselves is to change the present confused and poisoned intellectual climate. If we fail, we shall become guilty of a new *trahison des clercs*, and the responsibility before history will be ours.

Since the Berlin Congress launched its Manifesto, its Secretariat has received a flood of letters asking us to clarify our attitude to a number of questions. The following are our answers to some of the questions which seem to us most typical.

**QUESTION:** How can we pretend to defend freedom while the Western world is rife with social injustice, political corruption, racial discrimination?

**ANSWER:** We do not pretend that our democracies are anywhere approaching an ideal state. We are defending our relative freedoms against the total unfreedom of dictatorial regimes.

This is not an abstract distinction. Its validity is demonstrated by the mass exodus of persecuted people from the satellite countries to the West. Europe has become a one-way street which points like an arrow from total slavery to relative freedom. The wretched masses who have left their homes, their goods and chattel, with no better immediate prospects than physical

safety in a DP camp, have a bitter knowledge of the reality of our time—a knowledge which a considerable proportion of our intelligentsia lacks. Those writers who prove in clever articles that there is nothing to choose between the two "blocs" are herewith invited to spend a few days at the "school of reality" of these displaced persons camps. To organize such tours will be one of the first practical operations of the Friends of Liberty.

**QUESTION:** I agree with your aims. But doesn't your militant, anti-totalitarian attitude contribute to making the cold war more acute, and drive us nearer to the hot war?

**ANSWER:** We are convinced that a militant anti-totalitarian attitude is our last and only chance of preventing war.

Every political and ideological Munich brings war one step nearer.

Every proof that the free world is strong and united makes the danger of war recede one step further.

Every bona fide Communist voter brought back into the democratic camp means the loss of one potential Fifth Columnist to the aggressor.

Every fellow-traveler cured of his morbid obsession means one potential collaborator less.

The above goes for the rank and file. Tolerance of mental aberrations cannot be extended to members of the professional intelligentsia. Farm-hands and factory workers labor under the handicap of a fragmentary education, and often it is physically impossible for them to get at the facts. The professional intelligentsia has no such excuses. Refusal to acknowledge facts, conscious or unconscious distortion of facts, frivolity and foolishness on the part of those who influence public opinion, are crimes against the spirit even if rarely definable by law.

Before the last war, intellectuals who supported Hitler's policy of concentration camps, or refused to admit that German concentration camps existed, were ostracized by progressive intellectuals. The writers and scientists who today support Russian concentration camps and mass deportations, or refuse to admit the facts concerning them, are still regarded as "progressive," "idealistic," and so on. We are opposed to the persecution of the ignorant and the innocent. We are opposed to the toleration of the totalitarian creed in the professional intelligentsia. We refuse to grant intellectual respectability to the active or passive accomplices of tyranny, terror and defamation.

**QUESTION:** Is it possible for a Socialist or a member of the moderate Left to cooperate with right-wing political parties against the extreme Left?

**ANSWER:** The question contains a semantic fallacy. The parties directed by the Cominform do not represent the "Left" any more than the "People's Democracies" are governed by the people. The worship of a Fuehrer, the branding of all opposition as a crime, the abolition of habeas corpus, of freedom of assembly and speech, the rule of police and censorship, are all characteristics not of the extreme Left but of the extreme Right.

The fact that misguided portions

of the working class, for instance in France and Italy, support the Communist party, does not make it a left-wing party. Millions of Italian and German workers enlisted in the Fascist and Nazi parties in an equally mistaken belief, but that did not make Fascism a left-wing movement.

The terms "moderate" and "extreme" Left are one of the main causes of the present intellectual confusion. There is no continuity or kinship between the parties of social progress and the worshippers of tyranny and terror.

**QUESTION:** Granted the previous point, I am still not sure whether a real collaboration between Socialists and right-wing parties is possible or even desirable.

**ANSWER:** We believe such a collaboration to be both possible and desirable—with certain reservations.

That it is possible was proved by our Berlin Congress, where English Laborites and Conservatives, French Socialists and Gaullists, spoke from the same platform, collaborated in committees and achieved after long and hard discussion complete unanimity on the text of our Manifesto, on our future program, and on the composition of our International Committee and working Secretariat.

This collaboration is desirable if its objectives are limited to the task of uniting each free nation against threats to its freedom from within and without and thus acting as a deterrent against aggression. It is undesirable if the slogan of unity serves as a cloak for attempts to suppress the democratic rivalry between political parties and groups.

In other words, an essential distinction must be made between short-term and long-term aims. By long-term aims, we mean the age-old struggle for reform, for social justice, for a more equitable form of government. By short-term aims, we mean the necessity of fighting an immediate emergency.

A nation is doomed to perish if a considerable part of its population refuses to fight against an immediate threat unless and until an ideal state of social justice is reached.

A nation is doomed to lose its freedom if its population becomes so frightened by the short-term struggle that all the aims of the long-term struggle are sacrificed.

France collapsed under Hitlerite aggression because it failed to make this clear distinction between long-term and short-term aims, because social and party divisions took priority over the tasks imposed by the immediate emergency.

Europe will share the fate of France in 1939 if it is unable to learn the lessons of the past.

**QUESTION:** What about Spain?

**ANSWER:** We consider Franco's totalitarian regime to be as abhorrent as any other tyranny—and have said so in a special Resolution on Spain adopted by the Berlin Congress. But it is unlikely that fifteen million Spaniards will start a war of aggression against the world, and only too likely that the Soviet regime and its satellites will continue the war of aggression they started in Korea. Therefore, our emphasis is on the immediate and principal danger from the East, and we refuse

to fall into the trap of Cominform propagandists who want to divert our attention and energies from the real threat into a crusade against Francisco Franco.

**QUESTION:** Your Manifesto protests against totalitarian slavery, but is silent on matters like racial discrimination against the Negroes in the United States. Why?

**ANSWER:** The answer is much the same as on the Spanish question. Communist propaganda deliberately plays up the Negro question to divert attention from the totalitarian threat and to spread confusion in the progressive camp.

The Cominform propagandists and their intellectual dupes pretend that Negroes are tarred and feathered on every street corner in America.<sup>1</sup> Accordingly, every small racial disturbance in America is played up in big headlines by the progressive press; whereas the deportation of the population of entire Soviet republics—e.g., the Volga-Germans, the Crimean and Chechen Republics—even if officially admitted, are passed over in silence.

During the round hundred years since the abolition of slavery, the condition of Negroes in the United States has steadily, though admittedly much too slowly, improved. This improvement might be compared to a continuously ascending curve; whereas the curve of progress in Soviet Russia and its satellite countries shows a sudden break and steep fall into the abyss. To accelerate this improvement, and to obtain complete economic and social equality for Negroes, is part of the struggle for long-term aims which must continue. But it is madness to refuse to fight the danger of the total enslavement of Europe because in the Southern states of America Negroes still have to travel in separate railway compartments. Precisely this madness is echoed every day by highbrow French intellectual and their cliques.

If we translated their argument back into the language of the Popular Front of 1936, it would run something like this: "We have no right to fight Hitler's plan of sending six million Jews to the gas chambers as long as a single Jew is excluded from a fashionable hotel in America. Only when the last Jew and Negro has reached a state of absolute equality, and only when all factories in France have been socialized, and all colonial peoples liberated—only then shall we have the right to make a Popular Front and to defend what remains of Europe against the Reichswehr and the Gestapo. And if Europe meanwhile goes to the dogs, and a few million Frenchmen are deported to forced labor and concentration camps, that is just too bad; what matters is that our revolutionary conscience should be kept clean."<sup>2</sup>

The New Leader

<sup>1</sup>Incidentally, during the last decade the number of Negroes lynched in the United States has never exceeded two a year. However horrifying even two such crimes are, they only represent a fraction of one per mil of the number of crimes against humanity committed annually by the totalitarian regimes.

<sup>2</sup>It may be mentioned that out of the seven American members of the International Committee of the Congress, two are Negroes.

# SRI AUROBINDO, THE LEADER OF THE EVOLUTION

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

By "Synergist"

### SECTION III : THE NEW WORLD-VIEW

#### (a) THE SPIRITUAL METAPHYSIC

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

(Continued from the issue of November 25, 1950)

#### THE Gnostic-SPIRITUAL LEVELS

In the last essay the gnostic-spiritual levels between Mind and Supermind—the Higher Mind, the Illumined Mind, the Intuitive Mind and the Overmind—were referred to in connection with attaining knowledge of the dynamic and creative side of Reality. Only the Overmind was briefly discussed there because it has a direct bearing on the different aspects of the Divine Reality; but for making the necessary epistemic and gnostic-bridging between the two levels of cognition, Mind and Supermind, all these intermediate levels will have to be examined also. The subliminal ranges of the inner mind, the inner vital and the subtle physical—ranges of consciousness parallel to the normal—have already been discussed. The gnostic ranges under discussion here are not paranormal like these, but supernormal, for they belong to a level of the Spirit higher than the mental or the subliminal mental.

Describing the nature of these supernormal overhead levels, Sri Aurobindo says: "...we perceive a graduality of ascent, a communication with a more and more deep and immense light and power from above, a scale of intensities which can be regarded as so many stairs in the ascension of Mind or in a descent into Mind from That which is beyond it. We are aware of a sealike downpour of masses of a spontaneous knowledge which assumes the nature of Thought but has a different character from the process of thought to which we are accustomed; for there is nothing here of seeking, no trace of mental construction, no labour of speculation or difficult discovery; it is an automatic and spontaneous knowledge from a Higher Mind that seems to be in possession of Truth and not in search of hidden and withheld realities. One observes that this Thought is much more capable than the mind of including at once a mass of knowledge in a single view; it has a cosmic character, not the stamp of an individual thinking. Beyond this Truth-Thought we can distinguish a greater illumination instinct with an increased power and intensity and driving force, a luminosity of the nature of Truth-Sight with thought formulation as a minor and dependent activity. If we accept the Vedic image of the Sun of Truth,—an image which in this experience becomes a reality,—we may compare the action of the Higher Mind to a composed and steady sunshine, the energy of the Illumined Mind beyond it to an outpouring of massive lightnings of flaming sun-stuff. Still beyond can be met a yet greater power of the Truth-Force, an intimate and exact Truth-vision, Truth-thought, Truth-sense, Truth-feeling, Truth-action, to which we can give in a special sense the name of Intuition; for though we have applied that word for want of a better to any supra-intellectual direct way of knowing, yet what we actually know as intuition is only one special movement of self-existent knowledge. This new range is its origin; it imparts to our intuitions something of its own distinct character and is very clearly an intermediary of a greater Truth-Light with which our mind cannot directly communicate. At the source of this Intuition we discover a superconscious cosmic Mind in direct contact with the Supramental Truth-Consciousness, an original intensity determinant of all movements below it and all mental energies,—not Mind as we know it, but an Overmind that covers as with the wide wings of some creative Oversoul this whole lower hemisphere of Knowledge-Ignorance, links it with that greater Truth-Consciousness while yet at the same time with its brilliant golden Lid it veils the face of the greater Truth from our sight, intervening with its flood of infinite possibilities as at once an obstacle and a passage in our seeking of the spiritual law of our existence, its highest aim, its secret Reality. This then is the occult link we are looking for; this is the Power that at once connects and divides the supreme Knowledge and the cosmic Ignorance.

"In its nature and law the Overmind is a delegate of the Supermind Consciousness, its delegate to the Ignorance. Or we might speak of it as a protective double, a screen of dissimilar similarity through which Supermind can act indirectly on an Ignorance whose darkness could not bear or receive the direct impact of a supreme Light."

These are briefly the main characteristics of the four intermediate gnostic levels. The following extracts now describe in detail each level, and clearly show how the knowledge attained gets wider and more accurate as one ascends the gnostic levels at the summit of which is the Supermind, the Gnosis itself, which alone can bring to a consummation the Higher Knowledge we are seeking. "Our first decisive step out of our human intelligence, our normal mentality," says Sri Aurobindo "is an ascent into a

higher Mind, a mind no longer of mingled light and obscurity or half light, but a large clarity of the spirit. Its basic substance is a unitarian sense of being with a powerful multiple dynamisation capable of the formation of a multitude of aspects of knowledge, ways of action, forms and significances of becoming, of all of which there is a spontaneous inherent knowledge. It is therefore a power that has proceeded from the Overmind,—but with the Supermind as its ulterior origin,—as all these greater powers have proceeded: but its special character, its activity of consciousness are dominated by Thought; it is a luminous thought-mind, a mind of spirit-born conceptual knowledge. An all-awareness emerging from the original identity, carrying the truths the identity held in itself, conceiving swiftly, victoriously, multitudinously, formulating and by self power of the Idea effectually realising its conceptions, is the character of this greater mind of knowledge. This kind of cognition is the last that emerges from the original spiritual identity before the initiation of a separative knowledge, base of the Ignorance; it is therefore the first that meets us when we rise from conceptive and ratiocinative mind, our best-organised knowledge-power of the Ignorance into the realms of the Spirit; it is, indeed, the spiritual parent of our conceptive mental ideation, and it is natural that this leading power of our mentality should, when it goes beyond itself, pass into its immediate source.

"But here in this greater Thought there is no need of a seeking and self-critical ratiocination, no logical motion step by step towards a conclusion, no mechanism of express or implied deductions and inferences, no building or deliberate concatenation of idea with idea in order to arrive at an ordered sum or outcome of knowledge; for this limping action of our reason is a movement of Ignorance searching for knowledge, obliged to safeguard its steps against error, to erect a selective mental structure for its temporary shelter and to base it on foundations already laid and carefully laid but never firm, because it is not supported on a soil of native awareness but imposed on an original soil of nescience. There is not here, either, that other way of our mind at its keenest and swiftest, a rapid hazardous divination and insight, a play of the searchlight of intelligence probing into the little known or the unknown. This higher consciousness is a Knowledge formulating itself on a basis of self-existent all-awareness and manifesting some part of its integrality, a harmony of its significances put into thought-form. It can freely express itself in single ideas, but its most characteristic movement is a mass ideation, a system or a totality of truth-seeing at a single view; the relations of idea with idea, of truth with truth are not established by logic but pre-exist and emerge already self-seen in the integral whole. There is an initiation into forms of an ever present but till now inactive knowledge, not a system of conclusions from premisses or data; this thought is a self-revelation of eternal Wisdom, not an acquired knowledge. Large aspects of truth come into view in which the ascending Mind, if it choses, can dwell with satisfaction and, after its former manner, live in them as in a structure; but if progress is to be made, these structures can constantly expand into a larger structure or several of them combine themselves into a provisional greater whole on the way to a yet unachieved integrality. In the end there is a greater totality of truth known and experienced but still a totality capable of infinite enlargement because there is no end to the aspects of knowledge, *nastyanto vastarasya me.*"

Regarding the next gnostic level, the Illumined Mind, Sri Aurobindo says that it is "a Mind no longer of higher Thought, but of spiritual light. Here the clarity of the spiritual intelligence, its tranquil daylight, gives place or subordinates itself to an intense lustre, a splendour and illumination of the spirit: a play of lightnings of spiritual truth and power breaks from above into the consciousness and adds to the calm and wide enlightenment and the vast descent of peace which characterise or accompany the action of the larger conceptual-spiritual principle, a fiery ardour of realisation and a rapturous ecstasy of knowledge. A downpour of inwardly visible Light very usually envelops this action; for it must be noted that, contrary to our ordinary conceptions, light is not primarily a material creation and the sense or vision of light accompanying the inner illumination is not merely a subjective visual image or a symbolic phenomenon: light is primarily a spiritual manifestation of the Divine Reality illuminative and creative; material light is a subsequent representation or conversion of it into Matter for the purpose of the material Energy. There is also in this descent

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## THE GNOSTIC-SPIRITUAL LEVELS—Continued from previous page

the arrival of a greater dynamic, a golden drive, a luminous 'enthusiasmos' of inner force and power which replaces the comparatively slow and deliberate process of the Higher Mind by a swift, sometimes a vehement, almost a violent impetus of rapid transformation.

"The Illumined Mind does not work primarily by thought, but by vision; thought is here only a subordinate movement expressive of sight. The human mind, which relies mainly on thought, conceives that to be the highest or the main process of knowledge, but in the spiritual order thought is a secondary and a not indispensable process. In its form of verbal thought, it can almost be described as a concession made by Knowledge to the Ignorance, because that Ignorance is incapable of making truth wholly lucid and intelligible to itself in all its extent and manifold implications except through the clarifying precision of significant sounds; it cannot do without this device to give to ideas an exact outline and an expressive body. But it is evident that this is a device, a machinery; thought in itself, in its origin on the higher levels of consciousness, is a perception, a cognitive seizing of the object or of some truth of things which is a powerful but still a minor and secondary result of spiritual vision, a comparatively external and superficial regard of the self upon the self, the subject upon itself or something of itself as object: for all there is a diversity and multiplicity of the self. In mind there is a surface response of perception to the contact of an observed or discovered object, fact or truth and a consequent conceptual formulation of it; but in the spiritual light there is a deeper perceptive response from the very substance of consciousness and a comprehending formulation in that substance, an exact figure or revelatory ideograph in the stuff of the being,—nothing more, no verbal representation is needed for the precision and completeness of this thought knowledge. Thought creates a representative image of Truth; it offers that to the mind as a means of holding Truth and making it an object of knowledge; but the body itself of Truth is caught and exactly held in the sunlight of a deeper spiritual sight to which the representative figure created by thought is secondary and derivative, powerful for communication of knowledge, but not indispensable for reception or possession of knowledge.

"A consciousness that proceeds by sight, the consciousness of the seer, is a greater power for knowledge than the consciousness of the thinker. The perceptual power of the inner sight is greater and more direct than the perceptual power of thought; it is a spiritual sense that seizes something of the substance of Truth and not only her figure; but it outlines the figure also and at the same time catches the significance of the figure, and it can embody her with a finer and bolder revealing outline and a larger comprehension and power of totality than thought conception can manage. As the Higher Mind brings a greater consciousness into the being through the spiritual idea and its power of truth, so the Illumined Mind brings in a still greater consciousness through a Truth sight and Truth Light and its seeing and seizing power. It can effect a more powerful and dynamic integration; it illumines the thought-mind with a direct inner vision and inspiration, brings a spiritual sight into the heart and a spiritual light and energy into its feeling and emotion, imparts to the life-force a spiritual urge, a truth inspiration that dynamises the action and exalts the life movements; it infuses into the sense a direct and total power of spiritual sensation so that our vital and physical being can contact and meet concretely, quite as intensely as the mind and emotion can conceive and perceive and feel, the Divine in all things; it throws on the physical mind a transforming light that breaks its limitations, its conservative inertia, replaces its narrow thought-power and its doubts by sight and pours luminosity and consciousness into the very cells of the body. In the transformation by the Higher Mind the spiritual sage and thinker would find his total and dynamic fulfilment; in the transformation by the Illumined Mind there would be a similar fulfilment for the seer, the illumined mystic, those in whom the soul lives in vision and in a direct sense and experience: for it is from these higher sources that they receive their light and to rise into that light and live there would be their ascension to their native empire.

"But these two stages of the ascent enjoy their authority and can get their own united completeness only by a reference to a third level; for it is from the higher summits where dwells the intuitional being that they derive the knowledge which they turn into thought or sight and bring down to us for the mind's transmutation. Intuition is a power of consciousness nearer and more intimate to the original knowledge by identity; for it is always something that leaps out direct from a concealed identity. It is when the consciousness of the subject meets with the consciousness in the object, penetrates it and sees, feels or vibrates with the truth of what it contacts, that the intuition leaps out like a spark or lightning-flash from the shock of the meeting; or when the consciousness, even without any such meeting, looks into itself and feels directly and intimately the truth or the truths that are there or so contacts the hidden forces behind appearances, then also there is the outbreak of an intuitive light; or, again, when the consciousness meets the Supreme Reality or the spiritual reality of things and beings and has a contactual union with it, then the spark, the flash or the blaze of intimate truth-perception is lit in its depths. This close perception is more than sight, more than conception: it is

the result of a penterating and revealing touch which carries in it sight and conception as part of itself or as its natural consequence. A concealed or slumbering identity, not yet recovering itself, still remembers or conveys by the intuition its own contents and the intimacy of its self-feeling and self-vision of things, its light of truth, its overwhelming and automatic certitude.

"In the human mind the intuition is even such a truth-remembrance or truth-conveyance, or such a revealing flash or blaze breaking into a great mass of ignorance or through a veil of nescience: but we have seen that it is subject there to an invading mixture or a mental coating or an interception and substitution; there is too a manifold possibility of misinterpretation; which comes in the way of the purity and fullness of its action. Moreover, there are seeming intuitions on all levels of the being which are communications rather than intuitions, and these have a very various provenance, value and character. The infrarational 'mystic', so styled,—for to be a true 'mystic', it is not sufficient to reject reason and rely on sources of thought or action of which one has no understanding,—is often inspired by such communications on the vital level from a dark and dangerous source. In these circumstances we are driven to rely mainly on the reason and are disposed even to control the suggestions of the intuition—or the pseudo-intuition, which is the more frequent phenomenon,—by the observing and discriminating intelligence; for we feel in our intellectual part that we cannot be sure otherwise what is the true thing and what the mixed or adulterated article or false substitute. But this largely discounts for us the utility of the intuition: for the reason is not in this field a reliable arbiter, since its methods are different, tentative, uncertain, an intellectual seeking; even though it itself really relies on a camouflaged intuition for its conclusions,—for without that help it could not choose its course or arrive at any assured finding,—it hides this dependence from itself under the process of a reasoned conclusion or a verified conjecture. An intuition passed in judicial review by the reason ceases to be an intuition and can only have the authority of the reason for which there is no inner source of direct certitude. But even if the mind became predominantly an intuitive mind reliant upon its portion of the higher faculty, the co-ordination of its cognitions and its separated activities,—for in mind these would always be apt to appear as a series of imperfectly connected flashes,—would remain difficult so long as this new mentality has not a conscious liaison with its suprational source or a self-uplifting access to a higher plane of consciousness in which an intuitive action is pure and native.

"Intuition is always an edge or ray or outleap of a superior light; it is in us a projecting blade, edge or point of a far-off supermind light entering into and modified by some intermediate truth-mind substance above us and, so modified, again entering into and very much blinded by our ordinary or ignorant mind substance; but on that higher level to which it is native its light is unmixed and therefore entirely and purely veridical, and its rays are not separated but connected or massed together in a play of waves of what might almost be called in the Sanskrit poetic figure a sea or mass of 'stable lightnings'. When this original or native Intuition begins to descend into us in answer to an ascension of our consciousness to its level or as a result of our finding of a clear way of communication with it, it may continue to come as a play of lightning-flashes, isolated or in constant action; but at this stage the judgment of reason becomes quite inapplicable, it can only act as an observer or registrar understanding or recording the more luminous intimations, judgments and discriminations of the higher power. To complete or verify an isolated intuition or discriminate its nature, its application, its limitations, the receiving consciousness must rely on another completing intuition or be able to call down a massed intuition capable of putting all in place. For once the process of the change has begun, a complete transmutation of the stuff and activities of the mind into the substance, form and power of intuition is imperative; until then, so long as the process of consciousness depends upon the lower intelligence serving or helping out or using the intuition, the result can only be a survival of the mixed Knowledge-Ignorance uplifted or relieved by a higher light and force acting in its parts of Knowledge.

"Intuition has a fourfold power. A power of revelatory truth-seeing, a power of inspiration or truth-hearing, a power of truth-touch or immediate seizing of significance, which is akin to the ordinary nature of its intervention in our mental intelligence, a power of true and automatic discrimination of the orderly and exact relation of truth to truth.—these are the fourfold potencies of Intuition. Intuition can therefore perform all the action of reason—including the function of logical intelligence, which is to work out the right relation of things and the right relation of idea with idea,—but by its own superior process and with steps that do not fail or falter. It takes up also and transforms into its own substance not only the mind of thought, but the heart and life and the sense and physical consciousness: already all these have their own peculiar powers of intuition derivative from the hidden Light; the pure power descending from above can assume them all into itself and impart to these deeper heart-perceptions and life-perceptions and the divinations of the body a greater integrality and perfection."

# IN THE MOTHER'S LIGHT

## THE LIFE OF LIFE

By RISHABHCHAND

### Man's eternal quest—the Absolute

What do men seek in life? In their desires and dreams, in their hopes and ambitions, as well as in their eagle flights of spiritual aspiration, what is it they have all been seeking since Time began? Is it not an Absolute? The scientist in his laboratory, the philosopher in his ivory tower of thought, the artist and the poet in their moments of creative inspiration, the mystic in his ecstatic contemplation, the politician on his platform, the farmer in his fields, the soldier in the fury of battle, the grocer in his shop, the beggar in the street, do they not all—all, without exception,—seek an Absolute of Bliss or an Absolute of Power, or an Absolute of Peace or an Absolute of Knowledge, or an Absolute of Energy, or an Absolute of life-satisfaction? One might go farther and say that even lust and greed and cruelty seek in their own perverse way an Absolute of self-gratification. In fact, all creation, consciously or unconsciously, seeks an—or, more truly, the—Absolute. No success ever succeeds in giving us permanent satisfaction, no fulfilment ever quenches our heart's desire. In spite of all the power we acquire, all the conquest we achieve, all the glory we attain, all the wealth we amass, all the love and esteem we win and enjoy, a discontent pursues our steps, a feeling as if all these were not enough, as if there was something more, something else,—we know not what—that had to be discovered and possessed. This discontent is so universal, so patent and persistent that even the most confirmed hedonist can hardly deny it. All life stirs, struggles, creates and destroys, falls and rises, crawls or rushes in quest of something which will give it eternal satisfaction and perfect fulfilment. Everywhere there is the thirst, the search for the Absolute in life, the Absolute of all life's values. Give it whatever name you like, it is for the Absolute that all life lives and labours, and to realise that Absolute and express it in its own terms is the ineradicable impulse of all life. Life would have long ceased if its quest had not been the Absolute, and its quest could not have been the Absolute if its origin and source were not the Absolute, assuring a perennial flow of force for a ceaseless advance and adventure. Whether we peer into the past, into the estuary of the temporal stream, or into the future, we descry the same silhouette of the Absolute shadowed forth against the dim background of an impalpable infinity.

### The Absolute—the Life of Life

This Absolute is the Life of all life. It is life's ultimate Truth, its unity and harmony, its force, its beauty and its bliss. We call it God or the Divine whom we seem to have lost in the wilderness of the sense-objects, it is the Divine whom we seek in all our obscure and groping endeavours, and it is the Divine we aspire to realise and reveal here in our material life. Even the atheist seeks an absolute of atheism, the rationalist an absolute of reason, the hedonist an absolute of life-enjoyment. They too are, therefore, seekers of the Divine, whom they profess to deny. The division and conflicts in our being—parts warring with parts, desires with opposing desires—are evidence of the eventual harmony, which is the goal as well as the origin of all existence. They point to the Absolute in whom alone all the jarring discords will be harmonised; for, there can never be an ordered play of relatives, a law of Nature, a system of values, a rule of conduct or a rhythm of evolution in life without an Absolute embracing and leading them together in the steps of its own shadowless light. If the relativities are real—with an apology to Shankar and Berkeley—, if the constituents of life are real and living, then the Absolute in whom they subsist and grow is also real and living. This real living Absolute is God, the Life of all life.

### The Absolute—the Transcendent Transfigurer

The Absolute is not only the immanent substratum and link of all relatives, but also the Transcendent, as Pan-entheism rightly holds. An Absolute confined to and exhausted in the relativities cannot be the ultimate Unity and the inspirer and leader of the evolution of its own multiplicity. The Creator is superior to His creation, the Fount is anterior to its flow, the One is transcendent of the Many. Beyond life and in life, the Life of life is the sole reality, the sole object of human knowledge and the solitary goal and abode of all creatures. If we exclude the aspect of God's transcendence, we condemn life to a horizontal circling and shut out from its vision the golden altitudes from which Truth has often beamed down upon us and benign influences have sought to mould us. The Upanishadic image represents in the truest and most vivid light the eternal relation of the world with its Source: "This is the eternal Ashwattha tree whose roots are aloft, but its branches are downward. It is He that is called the Bright One and Brahman and Immortality, and in Him are all the worlds established; none goeth beyond Him. This is the thing thou seekest." The roots are above and the branches are downwards, the roots nourish and sustain the branches, which grow and thrive and bear fruits and flowers. This is the true relation, and to forget it is to forget the basal truth of our existence. Besides, transcendence transfigures. The Hegelian Absolute can weave on endless webs of relativities out of the elements of the universe and within the limits of Time and Space, but it cannot bring down—from where will it?—a new principle, introduce a revolutionary rhythm, initiate a radical departure. Its crea-

tions will be but permutations and combinations of the same existing elements, varying patterns, protean repetitions of the time-worn, space-soiled principles and powers. It cannot transfigure or transform. It is only God and the Son of God in whom lies the secret of the transfiguration of the son of man; it is only in the Word that one has to seek the mystery of the transubstantiation of the flesh.

### Faith, the Leader

This transcendent-immanent Absolute is the Divine, the Life of our life whom we have to seek continuously and discover and embrace in love and joy. Does our sense-bound reason doubt His existence, or deny it? Does culture mean unbelief, and enlightenment the lurid glow of agnosticism? But our doubts and denials are not really categoric negatives, they are only a temporary revolt and resistance of a dominant and pampered part of our being, indirectly serving to stimulate and strengthen the faith in the other parts. Faith is the inalienable base of life's evolutionary progression, and without it nothing could move or advance. Our reason may cover it up in contempt or spurn it as a relic of our primitive barbarism, but cannot kill it altogether, for to kill it would be to kill the soul itself. Much to the disgust and disappointment of the reason, the relic lives on and even threatens to consume the doubts and misgivings of reason in its white flame. Faith is at once the prevision of the Truth and its foreshadowing—it always points to the sun, even though clouds may be gathering in the sky.

### The Absolute, the Supreme Person

If we proceed with this faith, we discover that the Transcendent-Immanent Absolute, the Divine, is not only a living, omnipresent Reality, but a Person, the supreme Person, self-figured in all the forms of the universe. We can love Him as He loves us, adore Him as He moulds us, serve Him as He perfects and fulfils us. "Merely to turn to Him is to banish the bleakness and sordidness of our desire-driven life and stand in the liberating light and animating warmth of the living Sun. As the Mother says, "To turn towards Thee, live in Thee and for Thee, is supreme happiness, unmixed joy, immutable peace; it is to breathe infinity, to soar in eternity, no longer feel one's limits, escape from Time and Space"<sup>1</sup>. And she wonders: "Why do men flee from these boons, as though they feared them? What a strange thing is ignorance, that source of all suffering! How miserable that obscurity which keeps men away from the very thing which would bring them happiness, and subjects them to this painful school of ordinary existence fashioned entirely from struggle and suffering!"<sup>2</sup> Not one among those countless men who have turned to the Divine has ever had to complain that his life has been robbed of its joy and freedom. Can it be said of those who make material pursuits and the satisfaction of their desires the end of their life? What a contrast the God-filled life presents to the harsh discords and gnawing cares of the ordinary human life! What a poignant and illuminating contrast the life of a Buddha or a Christ or a Ramkrishna presents to the life of a Napoleon or a Bacon, a Voltaire or a Schopenhauer? An untroubled peace and tranquillity, a calm and comprehensive vision of the Truth and its manifold working, and a steady, silent, impersonal will fulfilling itself in the movements of life, is an ideal deemed impracticable, if not inconceivable, by those who follow either the lure of desire or the rushlight of their reason; but it has been more or less realised through the ages by those who have sought the Life of their life and the Self of their self, and followed His guidance in simple faith and confidence. A deep personal relation of love with the superpersonal Person and an unreserved surrender to His Light is the secret of transmuting our life into something vast, luminous, blissful and inexhaustibly creative.

### The Approach of Love

The supreme Person is the eternal essence and archetype of our terrestrial personality, each fibre of which is not only created by Him, but also constituted by His own substance and energy. Our true self is made in His image and for His cosmic work of multiple self-expression. If we awake to this truth, if we learn to live in our essential identity and union with Him, the sombre nightmare of our separative existence vanishes for ever, . . . this identity and fundamental oneness that our love fumbles for in the obscurity of ignorance and amidst the finite and fugitive objects of the senses. An illumined love discovers Him at a bound and carries us beyond the misery and mortality of our egoistic life into the rapturous heart of the Life of all life, where we enjoy "peace in strength, serenity in action and an unchanging happiness in the midst of all circumstances." Because the supreme Person is our own highest Self, the approach of love is the best and most rapidly fruitful approach, for, love is at once the flower and the seed of identity.

### The Supreme Person—the Pivot of Individual Synthesis

The first business of human life, the Work of all work is to find and realise the supreme Person in oneself and make Him the effective centre

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# SRI AUROBINDO CAME TO ME

By DILIP KUMAR ROY

## Apologia

I must start with a curious apology, that I do not feel called upon to apologise for what I venture to undertake, namely, to describe not so much how Gurudev appeared to me as how I reacted to him. For, when all is said, one can never hope to delineate the greatness of a great personality in abstract terms with purple epithets however heartfelt these may be. One can—at least that is how I have always looked upon the truly great all my life—only portray one's reactions to them—and even very imperfectly at that. I would go further and venture that the greater a personality is to us, the more he will elude us. Rabindranath Tagore once told me that we understand more than we think we do. To me the statement has never seemed cryptic. For whenever, in my life's gropings, I have run across a truly great soul, the impression he has left on me has grown in height and depth with time and I have felt that I profited by him more than I could assess. I can only express my helplessness if such a statement should appear obscure, or even meaningless, to some of those who may read what I am going to write.

I can only speak of what I know, and since I am persuaded that what I do not even surmise as self-knowledge is an important part of myself, I am entitled to express it even at the risk of appearing somewhat unintelligible to many. Also I warn my readers—even when I humbly ask them to lend me a sympathetic ear, without which none can possibly hear what another has to say—that I will have, perforce, to make such statements while reminiscing about one who came into my life like a storm at once liberating and imperious; whom I courted and yet wanted to draw away from; whom, on numerous occasions, I repelled yet could not help clinging to; acclaimed and yet criticised with all my irreverent impetuosity; whom I accused bitterly for being aloof although even his remoteness gave me boons of intimacy and vision which no physical nearness with my dearest friends and comrades had ever accorded. Also I would ask them, while they appraise my statements, to do me only the bare justice of believing in my sincerity; that is, to accept it when I say that I will not be consciously untruthful or dramatic. So that all the above statements I would ask them to credit as at least representing my reactions to one whom I wanted to woo and yet felt so frantically impelled to desert that I had the temerity to write to him, on several occasions, in a huff, that I had decided to end what seemed to me, in such turbid moments, a futile relationship which presupposed conditions in which I could never flower into fulfilment. One of these was, as it was well-known among all who had to do with him, that he was not expected to grant anybody a private interview except when, very rarely, he himself deemed it necessary. In my spiritual crises, I was sometimes allowed to speak to him, even sing to him but it left the Old Adam in me unappeased, so much so that sometimes I even went the length of apprising him, childishly, that I was going to leave him for good without any regret, when every beat of my heart reproached me for wanting to stifle its breath. I do not know if there has ever been such a strange relationship known to human experience where the recipient felt, time and again, that the donor had not given anything tangible and yet could not regard all the other boongivers put together, however tangible their gifts, as more important to himself. Reason never threw any light on this enigma, even though I wanted a rational clue to the mystery with all the dispassionateness I was capable of. I can only say now, when the giver whom I chafed against so often is no more, that I regard nothing that I can objectively count as an asset in my personality, such as it is, as not a gift, partial or entire, made by his compassion, a compassion beside which the deepest human tenderness I have known so far seems a mere shadow. And yet I may well speak of him from concrete indubitable experience—to quote his own words—as almost on a par with “the unseen Beloved, the lover whom we think not of”, who even in this drab world of dust and din “may pursue us, may come upon us in the midst of the world and seize on us for his own whether at first we will or no. He may even come to us at first as an enemy with the wrath of love, and our earliest relations with him may be those of battle and struggle.”

## An Explanation?

As I look back after having been havened at his feet for well over two decades, I find it still difficult to decide what it is that drew a flawed mentality like mine to one so perfect in his flowering. Was it his genius? Or his “face radiant with an inner realisation”, as Tagore aptly put it? Or was it the awe-inspiring aura of mystery he had woven around himself in his self-chosen seclusion? Or was it a sense of power he inspired which overwhelmed so many through the silence that had crystallised around him speaking so eloquently of things beyond our ken? Or was it the ocean of peace in which he seemed to float like Narayan calling to us, mortals, who clamoured for peace and yet outlawed it, a paradox he wrote about subsequently in his epic *Savitri*:

*Mortality bears ill the eternal's touch....  
Almost with hate repels the light it brings....  
Hard is it to persuade earth-nature's change....  
Its thorns of fallen nature are the defence  
It turns against the saviour hands of Grace.*

Or was it his deep diagnosis of the maladies of our age that inspired confidence in his power to heal them?

I cannot answer even now with certitude. A time was when I might have—when I was a votary of reason. But not now, when much of my proud faith in the human intellect has worn off after years of hopeless struggles with one who was so supremely equipped against my intellectual ideas and “rationalism” as I used to put it to him self-importantly. The result is that, in the end, I feel myself utterly at sea when I ask myself how I am to appraise his unfathomable personality. Did I ever truly know why I had not only come to him as a bee to a rose, but clung to him in spite of myself when, in my wrong moods, I told myself that the rose had long been drained of its honey? Could a seclusion like his, which seemed pointless, gain him any concrete power that was going to influence events or even give a lasting refuge of rational hope in these turbulent times of hot passions and murderous instincts stalking the earth? I found it difficult to believe this. Nevertheless I did believe—which I find difficult to explain clearly, believing as I still do in reason and feeling uneasy about blind acceptance of tenets which the credulous too often equate with faith and the faithful with loyalty. And the strangest thing was that in spite of my malaise I should have so seldom really missed my anchorage which had once held me fast to my old harbour of faith in humanity and reason when demon forces raised storms calling to irresistible mass suicide. Is this explicable on any basis except that the strange pilot had weaned me from my old moorings and steered my boat into a new harbour which protected me even when I did not know how. And as I believed this in spite of myself, could I have been far wrong in inferring that one had more knowledge than one consciously believed?

## The Disciples

It was Tagore who first told me that even as a child he had been imbibing things which had to lie for a long time deep ensconced in his subconscious as seeds before they could come to full flowering. This idea came to us, intellectuals of India, first from the West, possibly from the psychoanalysts. As a result we all felt a new grateful glow accruing from the acquisition of a new delectable knowledge. But it was only our glow that was new, not the knowledge. For the idea had been more than an interesting theory in ancient India: in our Yogic lore of old it had long since been accepted almost as a truism. I have dealt with this, rather exhaustively I am afraid, in my mystic novel *The Upward Spiral* where I have endeavoured to explain the wealth of associations and implications that have crystallised around our famous words like *samskara*, *upadhi*, etc: I would not care to repeat all that over again: suffice it to say that I came first upon this old knowledge (whose discovery I had put down to modern research of the Western psychologists) at the hands of Gurudev. For he it was who first startled me, in the early thirties, by bringing it home to me that this modern penchant of the Western psychoanalysts of trying to dissect and explain everything through the scalpel and microscope of the subconscious, however commendable as the first attempt of psychological research of the deeper kind in the West, could not possibly go far—until, that is, they began to take stock of the Yogic way of observing ourselves and change their *modus operandi*. “I find it difficult,” he wrote to me “to take Jung and the psychologists very seriously—though perhaps one ought to, for half-knowledge is a very powerful thing and can be a great obstacle to the coming in front of true Truth. No doubt, they are very remarkable men in their own field; but this new psychology looks to me very much like children learning some summary and not very adequate alphabet, exulting in putting their ABCD of the subconscious and the mysterious underground super-ego together and imagining that their first book of obscure beginnings (c-a-t — cat, t-r-e-e — tree) is the foundation of all knowledge. They look from down up and explain the higher lights by the lower obscurities; but the foundation of things is above and not below, *upari budhna esham*. The Superconscious, not subconscious, is the true foundation of things. The significance of the lotus is not to be found by analysing the secrets of the mud from which it grows here; its secret is to be found in the heavenly archetype of the lotus that blooms for ever in the Light above. The self-chosen field of these psychologists is, besides, poor and dark and limited; you must know the whole before you can know the part, and the highest before you can truly understand the lowest. That is the province of a greater psychology awaiting its hour before which these poor gropings will disappear and come to nothing.” In another letter he wrote to me in reply to a question of mine about Eddington's *Science and the Unseen World*: “The part about the changed attitude of modern science to its own field of discovery is interesting. The latter part about religious experience I find very feeble; it gives me the impression of a hen scratching the surface of the earth to find a scrap or two of food—nothing deeper”.

I am enlarging on this stray view with a definite motive. I must remind the reader that I have set out to portray such of my reactions to my Master as are likely to be of general interest, or shall I say likely to prove profitable to those who have a spiritual opening and yet cannot accept any loud lead given by any vociferous Guru. I myself appreciate their difficulty which is genuine enough as I used to fling it at my Guru time and again when I used to argue animatedly against Gurudev in his

## IN THE MOTHER'S LIGHT —Continued from page 6

of one's whole life. Ordinarily, human nature is a shifting mishmash of diverse elements and unco-ordinated energies. Its parts do not agree with each other, but follow their exclusive individual likes and desires to the detriment of the whole. Reason may try—provided it is itself sufficiently developed and detached—to impose an order and synthesis on the other parts, but so long as it is not itself freed of its own likes and dislikes, its way cannot but be unsteady and partial. Even the best rational synthesis is found to be tainted with imperfection and at least some amount of arbitrary constraint and coercion. It is only when the soul or the psychic being awakes and comes forward that a centre is found round which a stable synthesis can be built. But even the discovery of the soul is not enough to form a complete and dynamic synthesis in the entire being; the synthesis achieved may well turn out to be partial or static. What is essential for a dynamic synthesis is the discovery and establishment of the Divine, the Absolute Being, the supreme Person at the very centre of human life and consciousness, assuring a perfect condition for the self-accomplishment of His Will. The Life of life has to be installed as the Guide of life, if man is to attain his highest destiny. The glib prating of the rule of reason and free will cannot carry him anywhere, so long as the ego is the effective centre of his nature and desire the motive of his actions. Unless a higher light dawns and begins to lead his nature, his reason can never be perfectly rational, nor his will a free will. It is the will of the ego that he mistakes for the will of his real self and the blinkered, interested reason of the ego for pure reason. That is why the Mother says, "The most useful work to be done is, for each individually, to be conscious."<sup>7</sup>

"The final aim is to be in constant union with the Divine, not only in meditation, but in all circumstances and in all the active life."<sup>8</sup> This constant dynamic union is the sole basis of a perfect individual synthesis.

### The Supreme Person—the Centre of Human Unity

"The realisation of human unity through the awakening in all and the manifestation by all of the inner Divinity which is One."<sup>9</sup> The unity and harmony of mankind is one of the goals modern man has been steadily pursuing in his conscious thought and sub-conscious aspiration. The disruptive differences and discords, the aggressive cupidity and power-lust, the savage self-seeking and brutal conflicts which disfigure the present dealings between man and man and between nation and nation, however hideous and inhuman they may be, prove that they are only a last, desperate resistance of the beast in man to the advent of Love for uniting, harmonising, perfecting and completing humanity in the being of the Supreme. However dark the modern world may be, however dismal the present state of civilisation, mankind is undeniably proceeding towards a life of harmony, unity, peace and creative freedom. But the real unity can never come by political, economical, cultural or ethical means, for these have their origin in the mind and the life-parts of man, where there is no dynamic principle of unity and solidarity, but only egoistic exclusions and restrictions, or at best, a self-regarding self-sacrifice vainly seeking a reconciliation of contrary elements. Unity inheres, not in the mutable, phenomenal parts of man which make for multiplicity and diversity, but in that which is eternal in him and common to all mankind. "When you are one with the Divinity within, you are one with all things in their depths."<sup>10</sup> The Divine dwells in the heart of every being and every thing, and it is through Him and by Him that we must enter into relation with them. There is no other way to a real and abiding unity. The modern man, led by his reason or vital instincts, will no doubt try, as he has indeed been trying, all avenues of human unity, but a day will surely arrive

<sup>7, 8, 9</sup> "Words of the Mother".

<sup>10, 11, 12</sup> "Words of the Mother."

when, wearied and foiled, he will turn to the Life of his life and receive his first initiation into the mystery of universal unity and harmony, which is the bedrock truth of all existence. His illumined consciousness will then perceive that the surface dissonances of life prelude and not preclude the victorious emergence of the final harmony, even as the jarring notes of a musical instrument, which is being tuned, herald and prepare the coming music, and not preclude it. In the Life of life is the secret of the conquest and transformation of life and the evolution of the divine unity and harmony in the midst of multitudinous diversity.

### The Liberating Knowledge

"Without the Divine, life is a painful illusion; with the Divine, all is bliss."<sup>11</sup> Because modern humanity, in its pride of intellectual advancement, has exiled the Divine from its life, it is labouring under a painful illusion and tottering on the verge of a complete collapse, its culture sinking into savagery and its hypertrophied mental powers dragging it into a blind destruction. If human life embodied no divinity, the present crisis might well end in a total ruin; but the indwelling Divinity is indestructible, and its Will to self-evolution invincibly powerful. When the cup of a godless life of exclusive material pursuits has been drained to its bitter dregs, man, defeated and disillusioned, with grim death gaping wide to devour him, and chill darkness closing in upon him, will hear the rousing admonition: "All things betray thee, who betrayest Me." That will be his salvation, that will save him from death and damnation. "All difficulties are solved by taking rest in the Divine's arms, for, these arms are always opened with love to shelter us."<sup>12</sup> "Turn towards the Divine, all your sufferings will disappear."<sup>13</sup>

But the safety from death and damnation is not enough; man has to offer all himself to the Master of his life, so that the Master may offer all Himself to him and the drop and the sea meet in an ineffable embrace of unending ecstasy. "The whole of our life should be a prayer offered to the Divine."<sup>14</sup> Therefore, after the decisive turning, the self-offering, the self-consecration to the Life of life, and the integral, dynamic union. "One who has given himself to the Divine has no longer any other duty than to make that consecration more and more perfect. The world and those who live in it have always wanted to put human—social and domestic—duty before duty to the Divine, which they have stigmatised as egoism. How indeed could they judge otherwise, they who have no experience of the reality of the Divine? But for the divine regard their opinion has no value, their will has no force. These are movements of ignorance, nothing more . . . Besides, has not mankind proved its utter incompetence in the organisation of its own existence? Governments succeed governments, regimes follow regimes, centuries pass after centuries, but human misery remains lamentably the same. It will always be so, as long as man remains what he is, blind and ignorant, closed to all spiritual reality. A transformation, an illumination of the human consciousness alone can bring about a real amelioration in the condition of humanity. Thus even from the standpoint of human life, it follows logically that the first duty of man is to seek and possess the divine consciousness."<sup>15</sup>

This aspiration, this faith, this loving surrender to the Life of life will not mean a renunciation or denial of reason, but its sublimation into a higher intelligence, which does not gloat over the surface of things, but looks deep into their truth and essence and visions the one Reality everywhere and its self-fulfilling creative Will. The next step on the ladder of evolution will carry man from reason to supra-rational Light. "Turn from the dead past and look straight towards the future. Your religion, country, family lie there: it is the Divine."<sup>16</sup>

<sup>13</sup> "Words of the Mother".

<sup>14, 15, 16</sup> Words of the Mother.

## SRI AUROBINDO CAME TO ME —Continued from page 7

own citadel. Many people are today terrified by the prospect of Guruvad because having contacted some fake Gurus in India they dread if not abhor the idea of being dictated to or halted by arbitrary Thou-shalt-nots of obsolete formalism.

When I first arrived at the Ashram in 1928, I was given to understand by some modern neophytes—there were only about eighty of us in those days—that one must never even dream of questioning any law laid down by our Gurus, namely, Sri Aurobindo and the Mother. This made me very unhappy till I began to have regular weekly conversations with the Mother. I found her so sweet and kind and compassionate that one day I asked her, at a venture, whether she wanted us to fear her. "Fear!" she exclaimed in genuine astonishment. "What an idea! We want only the attitude of simple trust a child has vis-à-vis its parents."

I was at once reassured because I have been all my life a rebel by temperament. My flaws of character are doubtless numerous, as my numerous enemies will readily agree in full chorus, but I doubt whether even the most inveterate among them could at any time dub me a timid man and yet retain his reputation as a reliable judge. The point I want to make here is that I found the very idea of fearing the Guru intolerable. Unfortunately, however, it was in the air: at least many of the proselytes I met said "hush" whenever I enquired why our Gurus had laid down such and such laws, or issued certain general injunctions in the Ashram.\*

\* The atmosphere changed considerably towards cheerfulness as the number of inmates increased till, today, there is hardly any fear anywhere in the Ashram. But of this I shall have more to write—later on.

I felt unhappy till Mother assured me one day that she had to make certain rules only because no institution could possibly be run or corporate life be held together without some laws laid down for general guidance. "But," she added categorically with a simple disarming smile which I could never forget nor love enough, "I do meant it when I say that I would have no rules at all if the Ashram could be run without them. I am wide-awake and believe that all rules should come from within. So I never consent to formulating more rules or codes of general conduct than are absolutely necessary." I have put it doubtless in my own language, not hers, but as this has been all along the invariable norm of her conduct, in ideal as well as in practice, I cannot possibly have misrepresented her here.

About Gurudev this was even more verifiably true. And how I discovered this with glee and took advantage of it with alacrity! What I want to emphasise, besides, is that as days passed in our peaceful retreat under the aegis of two starlike souls who took charge of our welfare material as well as spiritual, I felt more and more at my ease in the Ashram atmosphere despite its obvious limitations. And, to resume the thread where I lost it, the more I argued with Gurudev the less ill-at-ease I felt about no matter what I said or wrote to him and in what tone,—so much so that in the end he seemed often to encourage me to forget as it were that he was my Guru when I, emboldened by his tolerance, started criticising him as one would criticise a friend in a tête-à-tête or a colleague in an informal debate. This made many people aghast in the Ashram as well as outside: e.g. my dear friend and mentor Sri Krishnaprem (Ronald Nixon) from

Continued on opposite page



# POETIC IMAGERY IN "SAVITRI"

BY RAJANIKANT MODY

Continued from the issue of November 25, 1950

From mathematics come images in a very great number. We will note the charm of some of them.

*Only was missing ...  
The integer of the Spirit's perfect sum  
That equates the unequal All to the equal One. (33)*

This, indeed, is the strange arithmetic of the Spirit. Another instance of the same arithmetic is:

*At first was laid a strange anomalous base,  
A void, a cipher of some secret whole,  
Where Zero held infinity in its sum  
And All and Nothing were a single term. (34)*

And still another instance:

*A chance that chose a strange arithmetic  
But could not bind with it the forms it made,  
A multitude that could not guard its sum  
Which less than Zero grew and more than one. (35)*

This is a charming idea expressed in an equally charming figure. The recurring decimals have become an oft-recurring image. This first refers to life:

*But now a termless labour is her fate:  
In its recurrent decimal of events  
Birth, death appear as its vibrating points;  
The old question-mark margins each finished page,  
Each volume of her effort's history. (36)*

The following is a lofty image applied to the supreme Oneness:

*It took up tirelessly into its scope  
Persons and figures of the Impersonal,  
As if prolonging in a celestial count,  
In a rapturous multiplication's sum,  
The recurring decimals of eternity.  
It made all persons fractions of the Unique,  
Yet all were being's secret integers. (37)*

And here is a crowded imagery, a procession of images rising one above the other:

*Existence seemed a vain necessity's act,  
A wrestle of eternal opposites  
In a clasped antagonism's close-locked embrace,  
A play without dénouement or idea,  
A hunger-march of lives without a goal,  
Or, written on a bare blackboard of Space,  
A futile and recurring sum of souls. (38)*

Then there is another beautiful image in:

*Assessed was the system of the probable,  
The hazard of fleeing possibilities,  
To account for the Actual's unaccountable sum.  
Necessity's logarithmic tables, drawn,  
Cast into a scheme the triple act of the One. (39)*

And the next one which follows almost immediately after this last, is also an excellent one:

*Out of the chaos of the Invisible's moods  
Derived the calculus of Destiny. (40)*

How much is suggested by this single simple-looking image! All the problems of Destiny and Freewill, of Destiny and the Divine's Will, of Destiny and Divine Grace seem to be lurking behind this magnificent figure and trying invisibly to draw the reader's attention to them. And then,

*The diameter of Infinity was drawn,  
Measured the distant arc of the unseen heights. (41)*

Leaving mathematics we now come to the most prosaic of things, from where one would least expect images could be drawn. They are business, commerce, economics, banking, etc.

*For all we have acquired soon loses worth,  
An old disvalued credit in Time's bank,  
Imperfection's cheque drawn on the Inconscient. (42)*

A similar idea but expressed in an entirely different form and in an entirely different context is to be found in:

*.....in Thought's broad impalpable Exchange  
A speculator in tenuous vast ideas,  
Abstractions in the void her currency  
We know not with what firm values for its base.  
Only religion in this bankruptcy  
Presents its dubious riches to our hearts  
Or signs unprovisioned cheques on the Beyond. (43)*

This is a full-fledged image showing us the futility of Thought and also of religion in our ordinary life. That life is pictured as a speculator in Thought's Exchange—a very forcefully significant image. A similar image is presented to us in the following lines:

*She accepted not to close the luminous page,  
Cancel her commerce with eternity,  
Or set a signature of weak assent  
To the brute balance of the world's exchange. (44)*

Here it is Savitri who is referred to. The luminous page is of "the unfinished story of her soul graved in Nature's book." Here she refuses to set her signature to the brute balance, but in another place she is shown to be exhausting an old account:

*Altered must be Nature's harsh economy,  
Acquittance she must win from her past's bound,  
An old account of suffering exhaust,  
Strike out from Time the soul's long compound debt. (45)*

The idea of Time's bank is repeated once again in:

*A doubt corroded even the means to think,  
Distrust was thrown upon Mind's instruments;  
All that it takes for reality's shining coin,  
Proved fact, fixed inference, deduction clear,  
Firm theory, assured significance,  
Appeared as frauds upon Time's credit bank  
Or assets valueless in Truth's treasury. (46)*

Here we can see that even when a figure is repeated, it is so very different and so uniquely lovely, that we hardly feel or even become aware of its repetition. The frustration that the human being feels in this world is brought out in the following lines:

*Cheated by counterfeits sold to us in life's mart,  
Our hearts clutch at a forfeited heavenly bliss. (47)*

A somewhat similar image appears in:

*A city of the traffic of bound souls,  
A market of creation and her wares  
Was offered to the labouring mind and heart. (48)*

This image of city-life comes in a different form in:

*.....the ego's factories and marts  
Surround the beautiful temple of the soul. (49)*

(Continued on page 10)

## SRI AUROBINDO CAME TO ME —Continued from page 8

Almora who took me once seriously to task for it. "You write that you have sometimes 'gone for Sri Aurobindo!' You must not. Of course he will not mind. He sees the jewel in the lotus and can smile at your criticism but you mustn't do it. Even in thought you mustn't criticise him. It all springs from desire to have things one's own way. He is your Guru, and in the first place, it is sheer ingratitude to criticise one who has shown you the light and in the second, the Guru is inseparable from Krishna. He is the one who has shown you the light and your whole life can be no repayment for such a gift. Even if you were to spend the rest of your life with no further 'experience' at all, you would be utterly wrong if you refused to give yourself to him. As far as I know he does not ask for blind obedience from his disciples (at least so I gather from your letter) but one must never criticise even when one can't follow. If one could understand everything one's Guru said then there would be hardly any need for a Guru at all."

I cannot honestly deny that Krishnaprem was right. But can I with equal honesty own that I was really sorry for having again and again committed the delinquency he so strongly reprimanded? I will go further and presume to ask my own heart whether I have not had a deeper vision of Gurudev's greatness through having been led on by him to fence with him as one would with an equal. And then could it have been at all possible for such as we to have dared him thus to duels had he not himself, in his infinite indulgence, consented to the thrust and parry with such inept tyros?

I have often wondered why he did it—not only sanctioned it but even

invited it—especially when his antagonists were what they were. Apropos, I am reminded of a letter a colleague of mine wrote to him in a light vein: "What disciples are we of what a Master! I wish you had called and chosen some with a better native stuff, like Krishnaprem."

His rejoinder was characteristic:

"As to the disciples I agree. But would the better stuff, supposing it to exist, be typical of humanity? To deal with a few exceptional types would hardly solve the problem. And would they consent to follow my path?—that is another question." But the crux of the difficulty, as he himself saw it, was expressed rather trenchantly in the very next, the third, query: "And if they (these might-have-been disciples with a better stuff) were put to the test, would not the common humanity suddenly reveal itself?—that is still another question."

I know to my cost—and I speak here as spokesman for the rest—how disconcertingly and obstinately common, even banal, this stuff turns out to be when probed deep enough by the revealing ray which comes down in answer to the agonised prayer, in each of us, of "the bleeding piece of earth," to quote a Shakespearean phrase.

But this cannot be dealt with before a picture of the Ashram life, as it evolved before me, day by day, from 1928 till today, is achieved. It will not be an easy task; nevertheless it must be attempted at this stage.

To be continued

# POETIC IMAGERY IN "SAVITRI"—Continued from page 9

Next we take up images drawn from grammar, language, logic, etc.

*We must fill the immense lacuna we have made,  
Re-ved the closed finite's lonely consonant  
With the open vowels of Infinity,  
A hyphen must connect Matter and Mind,  
The narrow isthmus of the ascending soul. (50)*

Here there is a fusion of three images. The first is that of a consonant and vowels. The second is a very daring and fascinating image, viz. that of a hyphen, which is followed by the third still more daring and fascinating image taken from geography, viz. that of an isthmus. The hyphen that connects Matter and Mind becomes in its turn the isthmus; thus there is an image upon an image. The three images coming in succession, one after another, raise the idea of linking, which is the common quality of all the three, to a climax in the last.

From this image of a hyphen we go to an image of punctuation:

*His little pleasures punctuate frequent griefs;  
Hardship and toil are the heavy price he pays  
For the right to live and his last wages death. (51)*

Even in the following lines there is a mixed image;

*Love's adoration like a mystic seer  
Through vision looks at the invisible,  
In earth's alphabet finds a godlike sense. (52)*

And here is another image suggested by the double meaning of a word:

*United were Time's creative mood and tense  
To a style and syntax of Identity. (53)*

It is the word "mood" and its association with grammar that has given rise to the whole image. Even a schoolboy is not spared from becoming an image: our circumscribed little being becomes in it

*A backward scholar on logic's rickety bench. (54)*

There is a bunch of images pertaining to writing and printing, coming one after another within a short passage.

*The skilful Penman's unseen finger wrote  
His swift intuitive calligraphy;  
Earth's forms were made his divine documents. (55)  
He imposed upon dark atom and dumb mass  
The diamond script of the Imperishable,  
Inscribed on the dim heart of fallen things  
A paean song of the free Infinite  
And the Name, foundation of eternity,  
And traced on the awake exultant cells  
In the ideographs of the Ineffable  
The lyric of the love that waits through Time  
And the mystic volume of the Book of Bliss  
And the message of the superconscient Fire. (56)*

But before these things are written,

*.....in Illusion's occult factory  
And in the Inconscient's magic printing house  
Torn were the formats of the primal Night  
And shattered the stereotypes of Ignorance. (57)*

This is an amazingly bold and daring metaphor and is expressed in a perfectly deft manner.

This brings us to another image of the Book of Being, equally marvellous and apt; although long drawn out, it does not become cumbersome or unwieldy or dull.

*There in a hidden chamber closed and mute  
Are kept the record graphs of the cosmic scribe,  
And there the tables of the sacred Law,  
There is the Book of Being's index page,  
The text and glossary of the Vedic truth  
Are there; the rhythms and metres of the stars  
Significant of the movements of our fate:  
The symbol powers of number and of form,  
And the secret code of the history of the world  
And Nature's correspondence with the soul  
Are written in the mystic heart of life.  
In the glow of the Spirit's room of memories  
He could recover the luminous marginal notes  
Dotting with light the crabbed ambiguous scroll,  
Rescue the preamble and the saving clause  
Of the dark Agreement by which all is ruled  
That rises from material Nature's sleep. (58)*

And a little later we find,

*The dumb great Mother in her cosmic trance  
works out through the appearance of a soul  
By a miraculous birth in plasm and gas  
The mystery of God's covenant with the Night. (59)*

And still further,

*He read the original ukase kept back  
In the locked archives of the spirit's crypt,  
And saw the signature and fiery seal  
Of wisdom on the dim Power's hooded work  
Who builds in Ignorance the steps of Light. (60)*

And lastly,

*Its earthly dialect to God-language change. (61)*

The idea of "the dark Agreement" in the last two lines of (58) and that of "God's covenant with the Night" in the last line of (59) are similar to another one appearing in Book I, Canto 3:

*Abolished were conception's covenants  
And striking off subjection's rigorous clause,  
Annulled the soul's treaty with Nature's nescience. (62)*

As we have taken up this group of images based on writings and treaties and agreements, the following two images will be found to be in their proper place here. The first one is in connection with "A hostile and perverting Mind at work" in the dark world of Night.

*It captured the oracles of the occult gods,  
Effaced the signposts of Life's pilgrimage,  
Cancelled the firm rock-edicts graved by Time,  
And on the foundations of the cosmic Law  
Erected its bronze pylons of misrule. (63)*

And the second image is a very similar one:

*An iron decree in crooked uncials written  
Imposed a law of sin and adverse fate. (64)*

In another place there is still one more image that resembles the foregoing two. This is only one image in a series of dozens of superb images applied to human Reason:

*On the huge bare walls of human nescience  
Written round Nature's deep dumb hieroglyphs  
She pens in clear demotic characters  
The vast encyclopaedia of her thoughts. (65)*

This brings us to two images drawn from the legal profession. Both are found applied to Reason. The first is a mixed image and the second one is as it were a continuation of the first from where the legal portion in the first is left unfinished:

*The eternal Advocate seated as judge  
Armours in logic's invulnerable mail  
A thousand combatants for truth's veiled throne  
And sets on a high horseback of argument  
To tilt for ever with a wordy lance  
In a mock tournament where none can win. (66)  
Assaying thought's values with her rigid tests  
Balanced she sits on wide and empty air,  
Aloof and pure in her impartial poise.  
Absolute her judgments seem but none is sure;  
Time cancels all her verdicts in appeal. (67)*

The next one is in reference to the destiny of the Earth:

*An immortal godhead's perishable parts  
She must reconstitute from fragments lost,  
Re-word from a document complete elsewhere  
Her doubtful title to her divine Name. (68)*

This also is an image clothed in legal phraseology and is a very suggestive one, pointing out to us the relation of the Earth with the Divine. Most unexpected and surprising in the context is the use of the following image, which too is in semi-legal terminology. It is applied to the Earth-Goddess:

*Heaven's privilege she claims as her own right.  
Just is her claim the all-witnessing Gods approve,  
Clear in a greater light than reason owns:  
Our intuitions are its title-deeds. (69)*

Even when we have read the first three lines we are not in the least able to anticipate the most amazing metaphor that comes crashingly upon us in the fourth line; for, the words "privilege," "right" and "claim" are as much ordinary terms as they are legal technical terms and the phrase "all-witnessing," although followed by the verb "approve," is not sufficient to bring to our mind the technical legal sense attached to it, as we usually take the phrase to mean "all-seeing." That is why the image of title-deeds as applied to intuitions comes as a complete surprise, and it is only after re-reading the first three lines in the light of the surprise given to us by the fourth line that we awake to the legal sense of the various terms used in them.

Here is another image taken from the Canto dealing with the Descent of Aswapaty into the kingdom of Night:

*Injustice justified by firm decrees  
The sovereign weights of Error's legalised trade,  
But all the weights were false and none the same;  
Even she watched with her balance and a sword  
Lest any sacrilegious word expose  
The sanctified formulas of her old misrule. (70)*

The whole description of Aswapaty's sojourn through that nocturnal kingdom is simply marvellous, showing us how even the best things in life become perverted and are put to use by the dark forces to achieve their fiendish ends.

This last image of trade leads us to mention another image used in another setting. This time it is a grotesque figure that is applied to Reason to show what hampered and puny a place she occupies in this world.

*A bullock yoked in the cart of proven fact  
She drags huge knowledge-bales through Matter's dust  
To reach utility's immense bazaar. (71)*

This is another of the dozens of images applied to Reason, that we referred to just a little back.

(To be continued)

- (33) II.1. p. 89. (34) Ibid. p. 92. (35) II.6. p. 158-9. (36) II.6. p. 183.  
(37) III.3. p. 294. (38) II.6. p. 181. (39) II.11. p. 245. (40) Ibid. p. 246.  
(41) Ibid. p. 246. (42) I.5. p. 71. (43) II.5. p. 153. (44) I.2. p. 19.  
(45) Ibid. p. 13. (46) II.13. p. 259. (47) I.5. p. 71. (48) II.6. p. 180.  
(49) II.5. p. 149. (50) I.4. p. 52. (51) II.5. p. 150. (52) V.2. p. 10.  
(53) I.5. p. 83. (54) II.4. p. 135. (55) II.8. p. 211. (56) Ibid. p. 211.  
(57) Ibid. p. 210. (58) I.5. p. 68-69. (59) Ibid. p. 69. (60) Ibid. p. 69.  
(61) Ibid. p. 70. (62) I.3. p. 25. (63) II.7. p. 185. (64) Ibid. p. 186.  
(65) II.10. p. 229. (66) Ibid. p. 229-230. (67) Ibid. p. 230.  
(68) II.2. p. 98. (69) I.4. p. 48. (70) II.7. p. 190. (71) II.10. p. 230.



# SRI AUROBINDO AND MAN'S SOCIO-POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT

By C. C. DUTT

Continued from the issue of October 28, 1950

In thinking of Truth, Beauty and Good, we must not forget that they are above our normal and usual being—they are something into which our ordinary consciousness is striving to grow. What, then, is man's primary insistent aim in life? It is to make room for himself and his kind in this world, and then to possess and enjoy and dominate. It is this vitalistic impulse that keeps man going; without it he is bound to decay and disintegrate. And the two forms of the Life-Nature in us, both equally strong—egoism and association, competition and co-operation—have built up human society.

Modern Europe has been dominated largely by a vigorous vitalism ever since the establishment of Teutonic preponderance in the West. The European of today is a dynamic practical man to the core. His strong vital impulse has come on top and has overcome completely the older traditions of Christianity, and of Latin culture. His life in society is threefold—domestic, economic and political. Society is for him the organisation of these aspects of life. Learning and culture, science and philosophy, morality and religion, these are aids and embellishments of life, and form no part of its substance. "Life itself is the only object of living."

The ancients had a totally different outlook. It is not that they did not realise the importance of organised group life, but they thought that the development of the rational, the ethical, the aesthetic, the spiritual being was of far greater importance. Greece and Rome laid stress on the first three, while Asia considered them as stepping stones to the fourth. The Greeks and the Romans were proud of their achievements in art, poetry and philosophy, while the people of Asia valued much more highly their spiritual heroes. The modern man has, moreover, by the aid of physical science mastered the material world and forced the material forces to work for his comfort, pleasure and prosperity, and made a remarkable progress in political and economic organisation. We see thus the clear difference between the two points of view—that of the ancients and the Asiatics on the one hand, and of the modern European on the other. The vital urge is individualistic; it creates the family, the society and the nation for its greater satisfaction. In the family life, the individual seeks to satisfy his craving for companionship, power and authority, and for prolongation of life. He possesses a family, exercises authority over it, has the members thereof as companions, and lives for ever in his progeny. Social life is an expansion of this domestic life and affords scope to the individual for enjoyment, mastery and companionship on a larger scale; a still wider field of power and possession and amity is provided for him by his national life. In this larger field, he can, if he is masterful, acquire name and fame and be a leader of men; but even if he is an ordinary man, he gets a chance of sharing in the pomp and prestige and prosperity of the larger organised group. We are speaking of the normal man. But there are abnormal men in this world, people who lead a lonely life by choice, such as hermits and highwaymen; there are also those, who live in the midst of others but try to make of them a ladder by which they seek to climb up. Man, in his long history, has slowly built up the graded group units—family, clan, society and nation—with the idea of satisfying a larger and larger vital egoistic demand. The ancient Indian Kula (clan) or the modern Indian joint family has had the same objective—the satisfaction of a group ego. But we cannot characterise the group as a lower phase of life, for there is always behind it the principle of the self-denial of the individual. As with individual life so with the family, there are always two ideals before it. One family can look upon every other family as a rival, or it can lose itself in the larger unit of society, accepting the aim and satisfaction of the social group as its own. Still the satisfaction sought by society is nought but the satisfaction of the ego of a larger group. There is, however, one difference that should be noted. The social bond is principally an economic one, much more so than the bond of the family. Politics comes in as a result of the relationship between one social unit and another. When mutual rivalry and jealousy amongst the various social units lead to constant trouble and disorder, things are ripe for the establishment of a nation-unit which would swallow up the lesser units. A bigger group-ego would then claim man's allegiance.

Now, this modern civilisation, this corporate life of man with its selfishness, vital urge, cupidity and blood-thirst, what relation does it bear to our higher faculties? Sri Aurobindo says that there is constant warfare between the two sides. There are numerous indications of this stubborn struggle. The vital being clamours for wealth and ease, religion welcomes bare poverty. The vital being says "Enjoy," piety says "Renounce." The vital being demands work, unceasing work, piety enjoins calm, peaceful inaction. The vital being requires fearless courage, piety insists on humility, non-violence. The vital being urges propagation of species, religion recommends abstinence. We can, however, allow that man is sometimes able to draw strength from asceticism, that even recoil has some use in life. But we must not let it go too far. If man's fount of action is choked, society will first stagnate and then begin to recede. Action is necessary for the flowering of man's higher faculties. They are bound to wither if they are kept out of touch with the stream of action. We have to see if man's urge to action is an anti-divine impulse, if he can-

not rise to divine consciousness through it. Sri Aurobindo has told us again and again that there is nothing in us that we must discard. Our Mind, Life, Heart, even Body, all have to be divinised. We have seen how man has evolved from the humblest origin, how in his long journey he has encountered many ugly things, and made many mistakes; still his steady progress has been maintained. He has achieved many things by his reason, but the supreme achievement still remains. For that, he will require the help and guidance of his Supermind.

Our domestic and social life is many-sided, but the urge behind it is mainly vital. When the divine principle slowly descends into the vital being, it turns Godward. The descent of the Divine implies the elimination of the separatist feeling and the awakening of a feeling of oneness. The mind of man cannot bring about this awakening; only the subtle power that transcends his mind can do it.

The bond of love is a powerful bond in human life. We see it in so many forms, both beautiful and compelling, in this world—love for the child, affection for the friend, devotion towards parents, conjugal emotion. There is no reason why we should seek to belittle these tender sentiments. They all take man outside the bounds of narrow egoism, and through them we can rise slowly to the Truth of unity. That is why so many forms of religion have recommended this method of teaching Bhakti. Likewise man's usual pre-occupations in life—such as earning money, politics and patriotism—all have in them a little of pure gold. They bring us a well-ordered and refined life, power, influence, courage and self-sacrifice and lift us out of the sordid grooves of existence. Still, as has been said again and again, we have to surpass the rational mind. And then alone, in the consciousness of the one Self, life will find a harmonious fulfilment of all its powers. There is a supra-rational ultimate of life as there is a supra-rational Truth, Good and Beauty.

Admittedly, the object of our search is the Divine and to attain divine consciousness is our goal. In this quest neither reason nor culture can be our highest guide. Where, then, are we to find the directing light? "To make all life religious and to govern all activities by the religious ideas, would seem to be the right way... for the lifting of the whole life of man into the Divine." Generally speaking, religion has occupied the principal place as man's guide in life. But every now and then, there has come a period when he has lost faith in this guidance and installed reason in its place. We are passing through such a period just now, though a change of outlook seems imminent. Religion is connected with some hidden Truth of our being, so it cannot leave us for very long.

On the other hand, ever since the two movements, the Renaissance and the Reformation, freed the European mind from the thralldom of ignorant convention, civilisation based on reason, in spite of many mistakes, has done a great deal for man. The period has been, says Sri Aurobindo, "a time of great activity, of high aspirations, of deep sowing, of rich fruit-bearing." All this has been achieved not by religion, but by man's newly awakened reason, by high ideals and by a spirit of philanthropy. This is why Europe has rejected religion as her guide. She boasts sometimes that she has killed it, but religion which has its root deep in man's nature cannot die, it merely changes its guise. We can say, however, that modern man has imprisoned religion and religious ideas in a cell. He won't allow them to have any say in the affairs of this world, not even in matters of morality. In his eyes religion is ignorant superstition, so he keeps his science and politics and sociology far from its contamination. Religion replies, "The world and all in it are transient. What are you running after? My calm peaceful state of inaction is much happier than yours." The average thinking man, however, is far from accepting this position. He answers, "Running after a new thing the whole time may be silly, but why should I accept motionless inaction as the law of life?" The whole truth of life of the individual and of the group we have got to discover. God-seeking is the chief aim of all religions, but what an amount of evil is being wrought in its name! Different sects and communities and their fanatical preachers and leaders have perpetrated disgusting atrocities. We must try to understand the urge behind such crimes. Sri Aurobindo says that there never was behind these heinous acts any impulse of true religion, they were always the result of narrow sectarianism. Never was the persecutor ashamed afterwards for his inhuman conduct. It is for these reasons that religion has failed to be the guide of our life. Man now understands it to be a sectarian affair under the control of priests and has consequently left his other-worldly interests in their hands while in his mundane life he has accepted the lead of the scientist and philosopher. This has set the man of science and the man of religion at loggerheads,—the former is engaged in the pursuit of truth, while the latter is afraid of it. True religion is, however, a spiritual force and never fights shy of the truth. Sri Aurobindo draws a distinction between religion and religiosity. It is the latter which is controlled entirely by the priest who has often proceeded to extremes in order to keep his hold on his flock. True religion, which is God-seeking, is a thing eternal. It can certainly be a force in human life in all its preoccupations. Religiosity, with its scriptures and rites and ceremonies, comes and goes. Yet even these have their uses in human evolution.

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# LIGHTS ON LIFE-PROBLEMS

(42)

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

**Q. 1:** Since the aim of Art is to reveal beauty and yield delight, it is maintained that it can be of no use in the training and development of our intellectual faculty which is concerned with the seeking of rational truth. Is this a valid conclusion?

**A:** Our intellectual activity has a double character: it is "divided between the imaginative, creative and sympathetic or comprehensive intellectual centres on the one side and the critical, analytic and penetrative on the other. The latter are best trained by science, criticism and observation, the former by art, poetry, music, literature and the sympathetic study of man and his creations. These make the mind quick to grasp at a glance, subtle to distinguish shades, deep to reject shallow self-sufficiency, mobile, delicate, swift, intuitive. Art assists in this training by raising images in the mind which it has to understand not by analysis, but by self-identification with other minds; it is a powerful stimulator of sympathetic insight. Art is subtle and delicate, and it makes the mind also in its movements subtle and delicate. It is suggestive, and the intellect habituated to the appreciation of art is quick to catch suggestions, mastering not only, as the scientific mind does, that which is positive and on the surface, but that which leads to ever fresh widening and subtilising of knowledge and opens a door into the deeper secrets of inner nature where the positive instruments of science cannot take the depth or measure. This supreme intellectual value of Art has never been sufficiently recognised. Men have made language, poetry, history, philosophy agents for the training of this side of intellectuality, necessary parts of liberal education, but the immense educative force of music, painting and sculpture has not been duly recognised. They have been thought to be by-paths of the human mind, beautiful and interesting, but not necessary, therefore intended for the few. Yet the universal impulse to enjoy the beauty and attractiveness of sound, to look at and live among pictures, colours, forms ought to have warned mankind of the superficiality and ignorance of such a view of these eternal and important occupations of human mind. The impulse, denied proper training and self-purification, has spent itself on the trivial, gaudy, sensuous, cheap or vulgar instead of helping man upward by its powerful aid in the evocation of what is best and highest in intellect as well as in character, emotion and the aesthetic enjoyment and regulation of life and manners. It is difficult to appreciate the waste and detriment involved in the low and debased level of enjoyment to which the artistic impulses are condemned in the majority of mankind."

**Q. 2:** Beyond the intellect is the spirit; can Art be of any help in the discovery and expression of the spirit in life which is the highest of all human endeavours?

**A:** "Beyond and above this intellectual utility of Art, there is a higher use, the noblest of all, its service to the growth of spirituality in the race. European critics have dwelt on the close connection of the highest developments of art with religion, and it is undoubtedly true that in Greece, in Italy, in India, the greatest efflorescence of a national Art has been associated with the employment of the artistic genius to illustrate or adorn the thoughts and fancies or the temples and instruments of the national religion. This was not because Art is necessarily associated with the outward forms of religion, but because it was in the religion that men's spiritual aspirations centred themselves. Spirituality is a wider thing than formal religion and it is in the service of spirituality that Art reaches its highest self-expression. Spirituality is a single word expressive of three lines of human aspiration towards divine knowledge, divine love and joy, divine strength, and that will be the highest and most perfect Art which, while satisfying the physical requirements of the aesthetic

sense, the laws of formal beauty, the emotional demand of humanity, the portrayal of life and outward reality, as the best European Art satisfies these requirements, reaches beyond them and expresses inner spiritual truth, the deeper not obvious reality of things, the joy of God in the world and its beauty and desirableness and the manifestation of divine force and energy in phenomenal creation. This is what Indian Art alone attempted thoroughly and in the effort it often dispensed, either deliberately or from impatience, with the lower, yet not negligible perfections which the more material European demanded. Therefore Art has flowed in two separate streams in Europe and Asia, so diverse that it is only now that the European aesthetic sense has so far trained itself as to begin to appreciate the artistic conventions, aims and traditions of Asia. Asia's future development will unite these two streams in one deep and grandiose flood of artistic self-expression perfecting the aesthetic evolution of humanity."

**Q. 3:** But can Art, which even at its highest is an activity of the limited human mind, possibly express the eternal and infinite Truth, Love and Joy and Power of the Spirit?

**A:** "Art can express eternal truth, it is not limited to the expression of form and appearance. So wonderfully has God made the world that a man using a simple combination of lines, an unpretentious harmony of colours, can raise this apparently insignificant medium to suggest absolute and profound truths with a perfection which language labours with difficulty to reach. What Nature is, what God is, what man is can be triumphantly revealed in stone or on canvas.

Behind a few figures, a few trees and rocks the supreme Intelligence, the supreme Imagination, the supreme Energy lurks, acts, feels, is, and, if the artist has the spiritual vision, he can see it and suggest perfectly the great mysterious Life in its manifestations brooding in action, active in thought, energetic in stillness, creative in repose, full of a mastering intention in that which appears blind and unconscious. The great truths of religion, science, metaphysics, life, development, become concrete, emotional, universally intelligible and convincing in the hands of the master of plastic Art, and the soul of man, in the stage when it is rising from emotion to intellect, looks, receives the suggestion and is uplifted towards a higher development, a divine knowledge.

So it is with the divine love and joy which pulsates throughout existence and is far superior to alloyed earthly pleasure. Catholic, perfect, unmixed with repulsion, radiating through all things, the common no less than the high, the mean and shabby no less than the lofty and splendid, the terrible and the repulsive no less than the charming and attractive, it uplifts all, purifies all, turns all to love and delight and beauty. A little of this immortal nectar poured into a man's heart transfigures life and action. The whole flood of it pouring in would lift mankind to God. This too Art can seize on and suggest to the human soul, aiding it in its stormy and toilsome pilgrimage. In that pilgrimage it is the divine strength that supports. *Shakti*, Force, pouring through the universe supports its boundless activities, the frail and tremulous life of the rose no less than the flaming motions of sun and star. To suggest the strength and virile unconquerable force of the divine Nature in man and in the outside world, its energy, its calm, its powerful inspiration, its august enthusiasm, its wildness, greatness, attractiveness, to breathe that into man's soul and gradually mould the finite into the image of the Infinite is another spiritual utility of Art. This is its loftiest function, its fullest consummation, its most perfect privilege."

K. G.

## SRI AUROBINDO AND MAN'S SOCIO-POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT—Continued from page 11

Only we must know them to be transient and labour slowly to divinise them. If the Spirit is the principal thing in religion, then a question arises: Is this Spirit unconnected with life, inconsistent with it? For the realisation of the Spirit, then, must we repress, eliminate Mind, Life and Body? Sri Aurobindo's reply is clear. Every principle in our make-up is seeking fulfilment according to its own laws, its own nature. If religion wants us to shun earthly life, then we can get no aid from it in building up and in maintaining our society. If, moreover, religion takes its stand on pain and sorrow, then all hope of realising Ananda in this life is over. The sooner we "quit this world of Maya and enter the status of Brahman," the better. That would be tantamount to denying the God of Bliss, the God of Power, the God of Good. On the other hand, the materialist's view of life is equally disastrous. He has taken up with zeal the world of power and possession

and enjoyment, but denies the divinity within it and beyond.

For the perfection of our life, then, both individual and communal, our ultimate hope lies in spirituality—a true spirituality that does not shun the world, but accepts and fulfils it. The world is waiting for a deeper and wider subjectivity that will spiritualise society and bring about individual harmony and communal happiness. In place of the half-spiritualised priest or the raw religionist, there must arrive the developed spiritual man to guide us to our destination—"the government of mankind by the Divine in the hearts and minds of men." This new theocracy will not come by a sudden charge and magical transformation. It will arrive by an evolution of secret possibilities which have been undergoing a long course of preparation.

To be continued.