

# MOTHER INDIA

Managing Editor:  
K. R. PODDAR

FORTNIGHTLY REVIEW

Editor:  
K. D. SETHNA

"GREAT IS TRUTH AND IT SHALL PREVAIL"

ALTERNATE SATURDAYS

OCTOBER 27, 1951

VOL. 3 NO. 18: ANNAS 4

## CONTENTS

SRI AUROBINDO ON "SAVITRI" .....	1	TWO NEW NOVELS (Review by K. R. Srinivasa Iyengar of Graham Greene's	
SRI AUROBINDO AND MAN'S SOCIO-POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT		THE END OF THE AFFAIR and Julia Strachey's THE MAN ON THE	
By C. C. Dutt .....	4	PIER) .....	9
LIKE A STREAM OF LIGHT (Poem) by Prajaram .....	5	THOUGHTS AT DAWN (Poem) by Ranju .....	9
THE INTEGRAL YOGA OF SRI AUROBINDO:		NEW TRENDS IN WESTERN THOUGHT	
THE MOTHER IN HER TRIPLE POISE by Rishabhchand .....	6	HAVE WE REALISED ALL THAT EVOLUTION IMPLIES?	
MAHA DEVI VARMA AND THE VALE OF TEARS		by G. N. M. Tyrell .....	10
by D. V. K. Raghavachari .....	8	THE FEAST OF LIGHTS by Nolini Kanta Gupta .....	11
BOOKS IN THE BALANCE		IS LOGICAL POSITIVISM LOGICAL AND POSITIVE? by K. D. Sethna .....	12
AUDEN: POET AND PREACHER (Review by K. R. Srinivasa Iyengar of		WHEN POEMS ARE BORN (Poem) by K. D. Sethna .....	12
Richard Hoggart's AUDEN: INTRODUCTORY ESSAY)			

## SRI AUROBINDO ON "SAVITRI"

9

Something more might need to be said in regard to the Overhead note in poetry and the Overmind aesthesi;\* but these are exactly the subjects on which it is difficult to write with any precision or satisfy the intellect's demand for clear and positive statement.

I do not know that it is possible for me to say why I regard one line or passage as having the Overhead touch or the Overhead note while another misses it. When I said that in the lines

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

the touch came in through some intense passion and sincerity in the writer, I was simply mentioning the psychological door through which the thing came. I did not mean to suggest that such passion and sincerity could of itself bring in the touch or that they constituted the Overhead note in the lines. I am afraid I have to say what Arnold said about the grand style; it has to be felt and cannot be explained or accounted for. One has an intuitive feeling, a recognition of something familiar to one's experience or one's deeper perception in the substance and the rhythm or in one or the other which rings out and cannot be gainsaid. One might put forward a theory or a description of what the Overhead character of the line consists in, but it is doubtful whether any such mentally constructed definition could be always applicable. You speak, for instance, of the sense of the Infinite and the One which is pervasive in the Overhead planes; that need not be explicitly there in the Overhead poetic expression or in the substance of any given line; it can be expressed indeed by Overhead poetry as no other can express it, but this poetry can deal with quite other things. I would certainly say that Shakespeare's lines

*Absent thee from felicity awhile,  
And in this harsh world draw thy breath in pain*

have the Overhead touch in the substance, the rhythm and the feeling; but Shakespeare is not giving us here the sense of the One and the Infinite. He is, as in the other lines of his which have this note, dealing as he always does with life, with vital emotions and reactions or the thoughts that spring out in the life-mind under the pressure of life. It is not any strict adherence to a transcendental view of things that constitutes this kind of poetry, but something behind not belonging to the mind or the vital and physical consciousness and with that a certain quality or power in the language and the rhythm which helps to bring out that deeper something. If I had to select the line in European poetry which most suggests an almost direct descent from the Overmind consciousness there might come first Virgil's line about the "touch of tears in mortal things.."

*Sunt lacrimae rerum et mentem mortalia tangunt.*

Another might be Shakespeare's

*In the dark backward and abysm of Time*

or again Milton's

*Those thoughts that wander through eternity.*

We might also add Wordsworth's line

*The winds come to me from the fields of sleep.*

There are other lines ideative and more emotional or simply descriptive which might be added, such as Marlowe's

*Is this the face that launched a thousand ships  
And burnt the topless towers of Ilium?*

If we could extract and describe the quality and the subtle something that mark the language and rhythm and feeling of these lines and underlie their substance we might attain hazardously to some mental understanding of the nature of Overhead poetry.

The Overmind is not strictly a transcendental consciousness—that epithet would more accurately apply to the Supramental and to the Sachchidananda consciousness—though it looks up to the transcendental and may receive something from it and though it does transcend the ordinary human mind and in its full and native self-power, when it does not lean down and become part of mind, is superconscious to us. It is more properly a cosmic consciousness, even the very base of the cosmic as we perceive, understand or feel it. It stands behind every particular in the cosmos and is the source of all our mental, vital or physical actualities and possibilities which are diminished and degraded derivations and variations from it and have not, except in certain formations and activities of genius and some intense self-exceeding, anything of the native Overmind quality and power. Nevertheless, because it stands behind as if covered by a veil, something of it can break through or shine through or even only dimly glimmer through and that brings the Overmind touch or note. We cannot get this touch frequently unless we have torn the veil, made a gap in it or rent it largely away and seen the very face of what is beyond, lived in the light of it or established some kind of constant intercourse. Or we can draw upon it from time to time without ever ascending into it if we have established a line of communication between the higher and the ordinary consciousness. What comes down may be very much diminished but it has something of that. The ordinary reader of poetry who has not that experience will usually not be able to distinguish but would at the most feel that here is something extraordinarily fine, profound, sublime, or unusual,—or he might turn away from it as something too high-pitched and excessive; he might even speak depreciatingly of "purple passages", rhetoric, exaggeration or excess. One who had the line of communication open could on the other hand feel what is there and distinguish even if he could not adequately characterise or describe it. The essential character is perhaps that there is something behind of which I have already spoken and which comes not primarily from the mind or the vital emotion or the physical seeing but from the cosmic self and its consciousness standing behind them all and things then tend to be seen not as the mind or heart or body sees them but as this greater consciousness feels or sees or answers to them. In the direct Overmind transmission this something behind is usually forced to the front or close to the front by a combination of words which carries the suggestion of a deeper meaning or by the force of an image or, most of all, by an intonation and a rhythm which carry up the depths in their wide wash or long march or mounting surge. Sometimes it is left lurking behind and only suggested so that a subtle feeling of what is not actually expressed is needed if the reader is not to miss it. This is oftenest the case when there is just a touch or note pressed upon something that would be otherwise only of a mental, vital or physical poetic value and nothing of the body of the Overhead power shows itself through the veil, but at most a tremor and vibration, a gleam or a glimpse. In the lines I have chosen there is always an unusual quality in the rhythm, as prominently in Virgil's line, often in the very building and constantly in the intonation and the association of the sounds which meet in the line and find themselves linked together by a sort of inevitable felicity. There is also an inspired selection or an unusual bringing together of words which has the power to force a deeper sense on the mind as in Virgil's

*Sunt lacrimae rerum.*

\*In the letter to whose several questions Sri Aurobindo has here replied, the point raised on the subject of Overmind aesthesi may be summarised thus: "Although it is plain that ordinary aesthetics cannot be equated with the Overmind's poetry in which Truth is the main concern, is not that poetry what it is because of an extraordinary type of aesthetics and not because it is concerned with Truth? There are in poetry many other factors than aesthesi; each plane may have its characteristic factor, as the Overmind has Truth; but these factors can exist without necessarily producing poetry, while no poetry at all can there be either of the Overhead or of the non-Overhead variety in the absence of aesthesi. If the poetic expression from the diverse planes are to be brought under a general heading, the common factor in them must be considered their essence, and what else than a many-moded aesthesi can be this factor? Knock Overmind aesthesi out of 'Savitri' and we shall have 'The Life Divine' and 'The Synthesis of Yoga' in the guise of a legend and a symbol. Truth will still remain because of the Overmind's presence, but shall we have poetry proper?"

## Sri Aurobindo on "Savitri" —Continued from page 1

One can note that this line if translated straight into English would sound awkward and clumsy as would many of the finest lines in Rig Veda; that is precisely because they are new and felicitous turns in the original language, discoveries of an unexpected and absolute phrase; they defy translation. If you note the combination of words and sounds in Shakespeare's line

*And in this harsh world draw thy breath in pain*

so arranged as to force on the mind and still more on the subtle nerves and sense the utter absoluteness of the difficulty and pain of living for the soul that has awakened to the misery of the world, you can see how this technique works. Here and elsewhere the very body and soul of the thing seen or felt come out into the open. The same dominant characteristic can be found in other lines which I have not cited.—in Leopardi's

*Insano indegno mistero delle cose*

*(The insane and ignoble mystery of things)*

or in Wordsworth's

*Voyaging through strange seas of thought, alone.*

Milton's line lives by its choice of the word "wander" to collocate with "through eternity"; if he had chosen any other word, it would no longer have been an Overhead line, even if the surface sense had been exactly the same. On the other hand, take Shelley's stanza—

*We look before and after,*

*And pine for what is not:*

*Our sincerest laughter*

*With some pain is fraught;*

*Our sweetest songs are those that tell of saddest thought.*

This is perfect poetry with the most exquisite melody and beauty of wording and an unsurpassable poignancy of pathos, but there is no touch or note of the Overhead inspiration: it is the mind and the heart, the vital emotion, working at their highest pitch under the stress of a psychic inspiration. The rhythm is of the same character, a direct, straightforward, lucid and lucent movement welling out limpidly straight from the psychic source. The same characteristics are found in another short lyric of Shelley's which is perhaps the purest example of the psychic inspiration in English poetry:

*I can give not what men call love;*

*But wilt thou accept not*

*The worship the heart lifts above*

*And the Heavens reject not,—*

*The desire of the moth for the star,*

*Of the night for the morrow,*

*The devotion to something afar*

*From the sphere of our sorrow?*

We have again extreme poetic beauty there, but nothing of the Overhead note.

In the other lines I have cited it is really the Overmind language and rhythm that have been to some extent transmitted; but of course all Overhead poetry is not from the Overmind, more often it comes from the Higher Thought, the Illumined Mind or the pure Intuition. This last is different from the mental intuition which is frequent enough in poetry that does not transcend the mental level. The language and rhythm from these other Overhead levels can be very different from that which is proper to the Overmind; for the Overmind thinks in a mass; its thought, feeling, vision is high or deep or wide or all these things together: to use the Vedic expression about fire, the divine messenger, it goes vast on its way to bring the divine riches, and it has a corresponding language and rhythm. The Higher Thought has a strong tread often with bare unsandaled feet and moves in a clear-cut light: a divine power, measure, dignity is its most frequent character. The outflow of the Illumined Mind comes in a flood brilliant with revealing words or a light of crowding images, sometimes surcharged with its burden of revelations, sometimes with a luminous sweep. The Intuition is usually a lightning flash showing up a single spot or plot of ground or scene with an entire and miraculous completeness of vision to the surprised ecstasy of the inner eye; its rhythm has a decisive inevitable sound which leaves nothing essential unheard, but very commonly is embodied in a single stroke. These, however, are only general or dominant characters; any number of variations is possible. There are besides mingled inspirations, several levels meeting and combining or modifying each other's notes, and an Overmind transmission can contain or bring with it all the rest, but how much of this description will be to the ordinary reader of poetry at all intelligible or clearly identifiable?

There are besides in mental poetry derivations or substitutes for all these styles. Milton's "grand style" is such a substitute for the manner of the Higher Thought. Take it anywhere at its ordinary level or in its higher elevation, there is always or almost always that echo there:

*Of man's first disobedience and the fruit*

*Of that forbidden tree*

or

*On evil days though fall'n, and evil tongues*

or

*Blind Thamyras and blind Maeonides*

*And Tiresias and Phineus, prophets old.*

Shakespeare's poetry coruscates with a play of the hues of imagination

which we may regard as a mental substitute for the inspiration of the Illumined Mind and sometimes by aiming at an exalted note he links on to the illumined Overhead inspiration itself as in the lines I have more than once quoted:

*Wilt thou upon the high and giddy mast*

*Seal up the shipboy's eyes and rock his brains*

*In cradle of the rude imperious surge?*

But the rest of that passage falls away in spite of its high-pitched language and resonant rhythm far below the Overhead strain. So it is easy for the mind to mistake and take the higher for the lower inspiration or vice versa. Thus Milton's lines might at first sight be taken because of a certain depth of emotion in their large lingering rhythm as having the Overhead complexion, but this rhythm loses something of its sovereign right because there are no depths of sense behind it. It conveys nothing but the noble and dignified pathos of the blindness and old age of a great personality fallen into evil days. Milton's architecture of thought and verse is high and powerful and massive, but there are usually no subtle echoes there, no deep chambers: the occult things in man's being are foreign to his intelligence,—for it is in the light of the poetic intelligence that he works. He does not stray into "the mystic cavern of the heart," does not follow the inner fire entering like a thief with the Cow of Light into the secrecy of secrecies. Shakespeare does sometimes get in as if by a splendid psychic accident in spite of his preoccupation with the colours and shows of life.

I do not know therefore whether I can speak with any certainty about the lines you quote; I would perhaps have to read them in their context first, but it seems to me that there is just a touch, as in the lines about the dying man. The thing that is described there may have happened often enough in times like those of the recent wars and upheavals and in times of violent strife and persecution and catastrophe, but the greatness of the experience does not come out or not wholly, because men feel with the mind and heart and not with the soul; but here there is by some accident of wording and rhythm a suggestion of something behind, of the greatness of the soul's experience and its courageous acceptance of the tragic, the final, the fatal—and its resistance; it is only just a suggestion, but it is enough: the Overhead has touched and passed back to its heights. There is something very different but of the same essential calibre in the line you quote:

*Sad eyes watch for feet that never come.*

It is still more difficult to say anything very tangible about the Overmind aesthesis. When I wrote about it I was thinking of the static aesthesis that perceives and receives rather than of the dynamic aesthesis which creates; I was not thinking at all of superior or inferior grades of poetic greatness or beauty. If the complete Overmind power or even that of the lower Overhead planes could come down into the mind and entirely transform its action, then no doubt there might be greater poetry written than any that man has yet achieved, just as a greater superhuman life might be created if the Supermind could come down wholly into life and lift life wholly into itself and transform it. But what happens at present is that something comes down and accepts to work under the law of the mind and with a mixture of the mind and it must be judged by the laws and standards of the mind. It brings in new tones, new colours, new elements, but it does not change radically as yet the stuff of the consciousness with which we labour.

Whether it produces great poetry or not depends on the extent to which it manifests its power and overrides rather than serves the mentality which it is helping. At present it does not do that sufficiently to raise the work to the full greatness of the worker.

And then what do you mean exactly by greatness in poetry? One can say that Virgil is greater than Catullus and that many of Virgil's lines are greater than anything Catullus ever achieved. But poetical perfection is not the same thing as poetical greatness. Virgil is perfect at his best, but Catullus too is perfect at his best: even each has a certain exquisiteness of perfection, each in his own kind. Virgil's kind is large and deep, that of Catullus sweet and intense. Virgil's art reached or had from its beginning a greater and more constant ripeness than that of Catullus. We can say then that Virgil was a greater poet and artist of word and rhythm but we cannot say that his poetry, at his best, was more perfect poetry and that of Catullus less perfect. That renders futile many of the attempts at comparison like Arnold's comparison of Wordsworth's *Skylark* with Shelley's. You may say that Milton was a greater poet than Blake, but there can always be people, not aesthetically insensitive, who would prefer Blake's lyrical work to Milton's grander achievement, and there are certainly things in Blake which touch deeper chords than the massive hand of Milton could ever reach. So all poetic superiority is not summed up in the word greatness. Each kind has its own best which escapes from comparison and stands apart in its own value.

Let us then leave for the present the question of poetic greatness or superiority aside and come back to the Overmind aesthesis. By aesthesis is meant a reaction of the consciousness, mental and vital and even bodily, which receives a certain element in things, something that can be called their taste, *Rasa*, which, passing through the mind or sense or both, awakes a vital enjoyment of the taste, *Bhoga*, and this can again awaken us, awaken even the soul in us to something yet deeper

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

and more fundamental than mere pleasure and enjoyment, to some form of the spirit's delight of existence, Ananda. Poetry, like all art, serves the seeking for these things, this aesthesis, this Rasa, Bhoga, Ananda; it brings us a Rasa of word and sound but also of the idea and, through the idea, of the things expressed by the word and sound and thought, a mental or vital or sometimes the spiritual image of their form, quality, impact upon us or even, if the poet is strong enough, of their world-essence, their cosmic reality, the very soul of them, the spirit that resides in them as it resides in all things. Poetry may do more than this, but this at least it must do to however small an extent or it is not poetry. Aesthesis therefore is of the very essence of poetry, as it is of all art. But it is not the sole element and aesthesis too is not confined to a reception of poetry and art; it extends to everything in the world: there is nothing we can sense, think or in any way experience to which there cannot be an aesthetic reaction of our conscious being. Ordinarily, we suppose that aesthesis is concerned with beauty, and that indeed is its most prominent concern: but it is concerned with many other things also. It is the universal Ananda that is the parent of aesthesis and the universal Ananda takes three major and original forms, beauty, love and delight, the delight of all existence, the delight in things, in all things. Universal Ananda is the artist and creator of the universe witnessing, experiencing and taking joy in its creation. In the lower consciousness it creates its opposites, the sense of ugliness as well as the sense of beauty, hate and repulsion and dislike as well as love and attraction and liking, grief and pain as well as joy and delight; and between these dualities or as a grey tint in the background there is a general tone of neutrality and indifference born from the universal insensibility into which the Ananda sinks in its dark negation in the Inconscient. All this is the sphere of aesthesis, its dullest reaction is indifference, its highest is ecstasy. Ecstasy is a sign of a return towards the original or supreme Ananda: that art or poetry is supreme which can bring us something of the supreme tone of ecstasy. For as the consciousness sinks from the supreme levels through various degrees towards the Inconscience the general sign of this descent is an always diminishing power of its intensity, intensity of being, intensity of consciousness, intensity of force, intensity of the delight in things and the delight in existence. So too as we ascend towards the supreme level, these intensities increase. As we climb beyond Mind, higher and wider values replace the values of our limited mind, life and bodily consciousness. Aesthesis shares in this intensification of capacity. The capacity for pleasure and pain, for liking and disliking is comparatively poor on the level of our mind and life; our capacity for ecstasy is brief and limited; these tones arise from a general ground of neutrality which is always dragging them back towards itself. As it enters the Overhead planes the ordinary aesthesis turns into a pure delight and becomes capable of a high or large or deep abiding ecstasy. The ground is no longer a general neutrality, but a pure spiritual ease and happiness upon which the special tones of the aesthetic consciousness come out or from which they arise. This is the first fundamental change.

Another change in this transition is a turn towards universality in place of the isolations, the conflicting generalities, the mutually opposing dualities of the lower consciousness. In the Overmind we have a first firm foundation of the experience of a universal beauty, a universal love, a universal delight. These things can come on the mental and vital plane even before those planes are directly touched or influenced by the spiritual consciousness; but they are there a temporary experience and not permanent or they are limited in their field and do not touch the whole being. They are a glimpse and not a change of vision or a change of nature. The artist for instance can look at things only plain or shabby or ugly or even repulsive to the ordinary sense and see in them and bring out of them beauty and the delight that goes with beauty. But this is a sort of special grace for the artistic consciousness and is limited within the field of his art. In the Overhead consciousness, especially in the Overmind, these things become more and more the law of the vision and the law of the nature. Wherever the Overmind spiritual man turns he sees a universal beauty touching and uplifting all things, expressing itself through them, moulding them into a field or objects of its divine aesthesis; a universal love goes out from him to all beings; he feels the Bliss which has created the worlds and upholds them and all that is expresses to him the universal delight, is made of it, is a manifestation of it and moulded into its image. This universal aesthesis of beauty and delight does not ignore or fail to understand the differences and oppositions, the gradations, the harmony and disharmony obvious to the ordinary consciousness; but, first of all, it draws a Rasa from them and with that comes the enjoyment, Bhoga, and the touch or the mass of the Ananda. It sees that all things have their meaning, their value, their deeper or total significance which the mind does not see, for the mind is only concerned with a surface vision, surface contacts and its own surface reactions. When something expresses perfectly what it was meant to express, the completeness brings with it a sense of harmony, a sense of artistic perfection; it gives even to what is discordant a place in a system of cosmic concordances and the discords become part of a vast harmony, and wherever there is harmony, there is a sense of beauty. Even in form itself, apart from the significance, the Overmind consciousness sees the object with a totality which changes its effect on the percipient even while it remains the same thing. It sees lines and masses

and an underlying design which the physical eye does not see and which escapes even the keenest mental vision. Every form becomes beautiful to it in a deeper and larger sense of beauty than that commonly known to us. The Overmind looks also straight at and into the soul of each thing and not only at its form or its significance to the mind or to the life; this brings to it not only the true truth of the thing but the delight of it. It sees also the one spirit in all, the face of the Divine everywhere and there can be no greater Ananda than that; it feels oneness with all, sympathy, love, the bliss of the Brahman. In a highest, a most integral experience it sees all things as if made of existence, consciousness, power, bliss, every atom of them charged with and constituted of Sachchidananda. In all this the Overmind aesthesis takes its share and gives its response; for these things come not merely as an idea in the mind or a truth-seeing but as an experience of the whole being and a total response is not only possible but above a certain level imperative.

I have said that aesthesis responds not only to what we call beauty and beautiful things but to all things. We make a distinction between truth and beauty; but there can be an aesthetic response to truth also, a joy in its beauty, a love created by its charm, a rapture in the finding, a passion in the embrace, an aesthetic joy in its expression, a satisfaction of love in the giving of it to others. Truth is not merely a dry statement of facts or ideas to or by the intellect; it can be a splendid discovery, a rapturous revelation, a thing of beauty that is a joy for ever. The poet also can be a seeker and lover of truth as well as a seeker and lover of beauty. He can feel a poetic and aesthetic joy in the expression of the true as well as in the expression of the beautiful. He does not make a mere intellectual or philosophical statement of the truth; it is his vision of its beauty, its power, his thrilled reception of it, his joy in it that he tries to convey by an utmost perfection in word and rhythm. If he has the passion then even a philosophical statement of it he can surcharge with this sense of power, force, light, beauty. On certain levels of the Overmind, where the mind element predominates over the element of gnosis, the distinction between truth and beauty is still valid. It is indeed one of the chief functions of the Overmind to separate the main powers of the consciousness and give to each its full separate development and satisfaction, bring out its utmost potency and meaning, its own soul and significant body and take it on its own way as far as it can go. It can take up each power of man and give it its full potentiality, its highest characteristic development. It can give to intellect its austere intellectuality and to logic its most sheer unsparing logicity. It can give to beauty its most splendid passion of luminous form and the consciousness that receives it a supreme height and depth of ecstasy. It can create a sheer and pure poetry impossible for the intellect to sound to its depths or wholly grasp, much less to mentalise and analyse. It is the function of Overmind to give to every possibility its full potential, its own separate kingdom. But also there is another action of Overmind which sees and thinks and creates in masses, which reunites separated things, which reconciles opposites. On that level truth and beauty not only become constant companions but become one, involved in each other, inseparable: on that level the true is always beautiful and the beautiful is always true. Their highest fusion perhaps only takes place in the Supermind; but Overmind on its summits draws enough of the supramental light to see what the Supermind sees and do what the Supermind does though in a lower key and with a less absolute truth and power. On an inferior level Overmind may use the language of the intellect to convey as far as that language can do it its own greater meaning and message but on its summits Overmind uses its own native language and gives to its truths their own supreme utterance, and no intellectual speech, no mentalised poetry can equal or even come near to that power and beauty. Here your intellectual dictum that poetry lives by its aesthetic quality alone and has no need of truth or that truth must depend upon aesthetics to become poetic at all, has no longer any meaning. For there truth itself is highest poetry and has only to appear to be utterly beautiful to the vision, the hearing, the sensibility of the soul. There dwells and from there springs the mystery of the inevitable word, the supreme immortal rhythm, the absolute significance and the absolute utterance.

I hope you do not feel crushed under this avalanche of metaphysical psychology; you have called it upon yourself by your questioning about the Overmind's greater, larger and deeper aesthesis. What I have written is indeed very scanty and sketchy, only some of the few essential things that have to be said; but without it I could not try to give you any glimpse of the meaning of my phrase. This greater aesthesis is inseparable from the greater truth, it is deeper because of the depth of that truth, larger by all its immense largeness. I do not expect the reader of poetry to come anywhere near to all that, he could not without being a Yogi or at least a sadhak: but just as the Overhead poetry brings some touch of a deeper power of vision and creation into the mind without belonging itself wholly to the higher reaches, so also the full appreciation of all its burden needs at least some touch of a deeper response of the mind and some touch of a deeper aesthesis. Until that becomes general the Overhead or at least the Overmind is not going to do more than to touch here and there, as it did in the past, a few lines, a few passages, or perhaps as things advance, a little more, nor is it likely to pour into our utterance its own complete power and absolute value.

To be concluded



# SRI AUROBINDO AND MAN'S SOCIO-POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT

By C. C. DUTT

*Continued from previous issue*

The French Revolution, in 1789 gave to the world the triune formula of Liberty, Equality and Fraternity. On the first of these words, liberty, was based the dominant political ideal of the next century—a free democratic nation. This ideal was accepted by all go-ahead peoples in Asia, Europe and America. But before it could work itself out everywhere, a new tendency intervened. This is the idea of a perfectly organised State, centred round the second watchword of the Revolution—equality. The great movement of liberty had ushered in a very limited kind of equality and had left untouched its most important aspect—"the preponderance of the haves over the have-nots", the difference between the successful and the unsuccessful which no society based on competition can eliminate. Thus did Socialism come to occupy an important place in the thoughts of men. Still the older ideal of individual freedom was hard to give up, and a compromise was attempted between the two ideals in Democratic Socialism. This kind of compromise could please nobody and the followers of equality ranged ahead and prepared to hand over all individual liberty to the control of the organised national State. Sri Aurobindo says in a new footnote—"This was done with a stupendous beginning of thoroughness in Bolshevik Russia, Nazi Germany, Fascist Italy, and the necessity or the choice of it threatened at one time to spread everywhere." Sri Aurobindo has explained in detail in his *Human Cycle* that man will never acquiesce for any length of time in the killing of the individual, in turning him into an absolute nothing in an all-devouring State. A psychological reaction in favour of no-government—a philosophic or spiritual Anarchism—is bound to set in. This we have amply set forth in the first part of our review.

In the Chapter we are at present dealing with, Sri Aurobindo has added a footnote on p. 89—"The appearance of Hitler and the colossal attempt at German world-domination have paradoxically helped by his defeat, and the reaction against him entirely altered the world circumstances: the united States of Europe is now a practical possibility and has begun to feel towards self-accomplishment." Of course the overthrow of Germany does not necessarily mean the elimination of Nazism from the world. State interference and State control of the German kind has entered into the administrative systems of many "democratic" countries, possibly for good. Besides, we must always remember that the last war was won with the help of a communist State, and that at the commencement of the War, Cripps and Goebels were vying with each other for Molotov's favour. Not only that; one section of British politicians was definitely pro-German, as was indicated by the flight of Hesse to the estate of the Duke of Hamilton in England. Still another pertinent fact. During the decade before the second War, England and France, each behind the back of the other, was coquetting with Hitler. All this goes to show that political leaders are, as Sri Aurobindo has said, not over-burdened with scruples. Those who are talking of the United States of Europe should take care not to let such men get a hold over things. Another factor to be reckoned with—a factor unavoidable in the present circumstances—is the fear of a third world war. That fear is resulting in rival blocs being formed by the two major powers of the world—Russia and America. No doubt, America has to create a European bloc to support her against aggressive totalitarianism, but this is not the same thing as a genuine European federation. If there is a next war, how will the two blocs stand after it is over? What we fear is that they would both crumble to pieces. There can be no U.S. of Europe without the co-operation of the U.S. of America and there can be no United States anywhere to the exclusion of Asia and Africa. In fact an Arab League and a League in South East Asia are in sight. The position of Europe is dubious. On the one hand, it is strongly conscious of being separate from Asia and Africa and superior to them, while on the other hand it is inextricably mixed up in the affairs of the other continents. What Sri Aurobindo wrote after World War I can well be repeated today: "If, therefore, any new supra-national order is to evolve sooner or later as a result of the present upheaval, it must be an association that will embrace Asia, Africa and America as well as Europe." But no arrangement is likely to lead man in the right direction unless there is an ethical advance, an advance towards straightforwardness, fair-play and justice. Imperialism masquerading as philanthropy will no longer do. Quite enough mischief has been done in the name of discharging the White Man's Burden.

There seems to be a demand, today, for some kind of unity, a first step towards the political unification of the race. The demand is due to various causes—sentimental, idealistic, economic and political. It also proceeds from a sordid desire in the stronger power to exploit the weaker. Whatever be the urge, a result of some sort may not be long in coming. The first step will possibly be a kind of understanding in order to arrive at the satisfaction of the most urgent common needs—arrangement of commerce, of peace and war, for the arbitration of disputes, for the policing of the world. In time, all this may lead to a closer union, along with the establishment of a Supreme Court and a Supreme Executive. Possibly no new principle will be evolved, the change will, more or less, be an adjustment.

Still one can never say what surprises Nature may have in store for man; a gospel of philosophic anarchism, a religious or spiritual upheaval, anything of this sort may intervene and direct human life to an unforeseen *dénouement*. But leaving the unexpected aside for the moment, we can say that an attempt at a political unity of a kind is in sight. It will probably be transient, and will be a resultant of all the previous experiences of man in group life.

Now there is a natural tendency in the formation of a larger aggregate that we must take note of. When a new political unity is created, the prime need is to enforce that unity, and in order to attain that end, much that the group had before has to be sacrificed—"diversity, harmonious complexity, richness of various material, freedom of inner relation". An all-powerful centre has to be created, a focus of State authority to make the larger unity firm and sure. Side by side with it, there has to appear a rigid social formation and a gradation of classes and orders. We see that all this actually happened in history before the advent of the modern world. In Europe, the free life of the cities and their guilds came to an end with the appearance of monarchs like Henry VII in England and Louis XI in France. In India, all regional liberty began to dwindle with the rise of empires like the Maurya and the Gupta. As in politics, so in society, a certain amount of democratic equality was inevitable in a small community. The example of Athens is cited by Sri Aurobindo: the highest offices and civic functions were open without distinction to all classes; in social functions, too, there was a free association and equality. We see the same democratic equality in the earlier records of Indian civilization. In Sparta and Venice, a different system was kept up by artificial means. To sum up, "Theocracy, caste and absolute Kingship grew in force *pari passu* like the Church and the monarchical power in mediaeval Europe under the compulsion of the new circumstances created by the growth of large social and political aggregates."

Sri Aurobindo describes in eloquent language the richness and vividness of life in the early city states, Greek, Roman and Indian, which man had to forgo when he created the larger units. Many problems, says he, might have been solved with a greater simplicity and direct vision if the old city states could have transformed themselves without losing their own life in the larger aggregate. But that was not to be. These earlier units had some incurable vital defects. In the small free states of Greece neither the Helot nor the Woman was allowed to participate in the full civic and cultural life of the city. There was the same disability in Roman and other states in ancient Italy. India was better off; there was no slavery and the Woman held a freer position than in the Mediterranean States. But this condition of things did not last. The Sudra and the Woman gradually lost that favourable position and came down to the level of the corresponding classes in Greece. Likewise, the early form of society everywhere failed to solve the question of mutual relationship between community and community. War remained the normal method of adjustment. The old states therefore had to dissolve and disappear in the larger aggregates—into the Maurya, Gupta and other empires in India; into the Macedonian, Carthaginian and Roman empires in Europe. The creation of the Nation-unit was postponed to the period following the collapse of Rome.

The ancient world was made up of small units like the city states and the small regional states—minor units standing in the midst of other units of a similar type. Each such group was marked, as it were, by a common culture, common language and common blood. Greece, Italy, Gaul, Egypt, China, India, all were such culture-units before they became nation-units. When the component parts of such an aggregate were too vigorous or assertive, national unification was more difficult to achieve. Still there were attempts to form a nation in most countries. In Egypt and India, the effort was successful, though in the latter country full success did not come till after a foreign occupation. In some countries unity was brought about by one component part conquering the other, as in Rome and Macedonia. Sometimes, before the nation-idea got firm hold of the mind, the dominant State was led by military ambition to invade outside countries and establish a large empire, as in Assyria, Persia and Macedonia. These premature empires did not last except in such cases where there was some sort of national consciousness at the core. Rome, which had more points in her favour than any other large aggregate, certainly endured longer, but ultimately it accomplished neither the nation-unit nor a firm empire unity and collapsed like other ancient empires.

We must understand why. Sri Aurobindo brings in the analogy of the creation of vital organisms. For organisation of group life man has used the same methods as physical energy uses for creating living forms—first smaller distinct units in a larger loose unity are formed with a strong mental sense, a developed body and a distinct vital ego. In the larger mass, the psychological sense and the vital energy are less organised and the body is only half solid—a plasm rather than a body. This has to be transformed

## SRI AUROBINDO AND MAN'S SOCIO-POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT —Continued from page 4

into a firm body, a well-defined vital and a clear consciousness and a will-to-be developed. This process is to be repeated till we find something like the original phenomenon of smaller distinct units in a larger but looser unity. Only both units are now bigger and more complex. Smaller city states forming a Greek or a Latin union give place to nation-units like Greece or Italy, England or France, in a Christendom—or a number of Islamic nations forming parts of a Caliphate.

There can be a number of organisms consciously subordinating themselves to a general unity. Some of these are killed and used for forming new organisms; but all cannot be devoured by one dominant unity, for then there is no unification, no continued greater life, "but only a temporary survival of the devourer by the digestion and utilisation of the energy of the devoured." In the formation of larger human groups, then, the problem is how to unify the smaller groups into a newer and wider group without killing them out. In history, Rome, for instance, killed and digested Gaul and Spain and Egypt after she had conquered them. The result was deadly for Rome herself in the long run. For a short while, energy and intellect poured into the voracious centre but only to be followed by a mortal exhaustion. Rome crushed out all local freedom, but in India the huge empires—Maurya, Gupta and Andhra—all-powerful though they were "never succeeded in passing a steam-roller over the too strongly independent life of the subordinate unities. It has needed the dominance of a foreign nation alien in culture to do "in one century what two thousand years had not been able to accomplish."

After the removal of the Roman pressure, the city and regional states acquired fresh life as elements of a new construction. In Italy, they offered serious obstruction to the growth of a national unity. But elsewhere they did not. In France, Flanders and Germany, where they survived as, more or less, free municipalities they rather helped in the larger unification. The old class-units vanished in most countries which had been rolled out flat by the weight of Rome. In Ireland, in the Scottish Highlands, in the remote parts of Germany they survived and resisted the national unification. We see thus the difference between the ancient cycle of nation-building and the European cycle. The creation of a new form of unity out of a jumble of old material has to be done in the first instance by external methods, helped by the pressure of circumstances, and thereafter, when stringent organisation has been effected, it has to be consolidated by internal development, by the awakening of psychological consciousness. Both in Europe and Asia there was a common tendency towards the development of a social hierarchy—the four castes of India and the four classes in mediaeval Europe. Everywhere the urge was to evolve a larger effective form of common social life." Except in Islamic society this form was marked by fixity of status. Islam's insistence on brotherhood and equality gave its social evolution a totally different character. Till a very recent period, it proceeded along its own lines. Otherwise, the first stage of development was very similar everywhere, with a few local variations. Taking, for instance, the Federal period in Europe, we find that it is very similar to the fourfold order of India but the variation is there, too. "The Indian system took its characteristic stamp from a different order of ideas more prominently religious and ethical than political, social or economic." Still there was, in practice, a social economic aspect of the Indian caste system and one wonders why Indian life did not follow the same evolution as Europe. The reason is not very difficult to understand. Sri Aurobindo puts it thus in brief: "In mediaeval India, . . . (evolution) turned towards the social dominance of the sacerdotal class and the substitution of a common spiritual for a common political consciousness as the basis of the national feeling." Regarding Japan and China, too, Sri Aurobindo characterises the trend of evolution, in a few words. The best

thing we can do is to give a short extract: "Japan with its great feudal order, the spiritual and secular headship of the Mikado . . . evolved one of the most vigorous and self-conscious nation-units the world has ever seen. China with its great learned class uniting in one the Brahmin and the Kshatriya functions of spiritual and secular knowledge and executive rule and its Emperor and Son of Heaven for head and type of the national unity succeeded in becoming a united nation."

An important feature of European history during a certain period was the conflict between the King and the Church. One of the early instances thereof was the quarrel between Henry II and Becket, which culminated in the murder of Becket. By this act of violence, Henry established the supremacy of the King over the Church in all matters of law and administration. Generally speaking the Monarchy was victorious in this struggle, not only in Protestant countries, but even in a fanatically Catholic country like Spain. The supremacy of the King was definitely established and Papal authority in matters mundane repudiated. In France, the paramount position of the royalty was put forth and made good by the two famous ministers, Richelieu and Mazarin, both princes of the Church. In Japan and China, as in Tudor England, the monarch became the temporal as well as the spiritual head. In India, the Rajputs who first developed a national consciousness vested all power in the King. In the Sikh State all power, spiritual and secular, was vested in a common body—the Khalsa. In Maharashtra, the people so secularised themselves that all castes became, for a time, one single people of soldiers, politicians and administrators. The fixed social hierarchy, so necessary in the first stage of a people's growth, had to modify itself gradually and had ultimately to be eliminated, a priestly caste, as such, is unwanted in a community that is striving to build up a nation-state. It can be otherwise only in a country like Tibet where the Lamas are the ruling class.

The second stage of nation-building is stringent organisation. A masterful monarchy is here very useful. The nation was moulded into a firm form round the Tudor kings in England, round the Capets in France, round the Romanoffs in Russia and round the House of Castille in Spain. Remarkable was the part played by the Hohenzollerns, at a later time, in moulding the nation-state in Germany. The Mikado played a similar role in forming a modern state in Japan. This tendency to sacrifice all individual freedom at the feet of an absolute monarch—an Elizabeth, a Henry IV, a Philip or a Peter the Great—has been very harshly judged by the modern mind, but rather unfairly. For, this stage of the New Monarchy was essential to the growth of the nation—not only New Monarchy in form, but as an unrestrained absoluteness. It was probably an "outrage on the human soul," but an inevitable stage in the growth of the united nation. It was not necessary in England after Elizabeth, and liberty "could progress by natural gradations. Absolute monarchy destroyed the liberty of all classes—one after another—of all classes, except the common people who had no liberty at all. The inevitable end was a revolt against all vested interest." Liberty then becomes the watch-word of the race. But we have seen already that Liberty is not enough if there is no Justice and Equality. But even Liberty and Equality are not sufficient. The greatest of the three principles of the Revolution, Fraternity, "though till now only an empty word on man's lips" must be added to the other two.

In this Chapter, Sri Aurobindo has, by quoting numerous instances from history, explained to us the methods by which the Nation-unit was formed. In the next chapter, there is not so much history as political philosophy, and he indicates the line of man's advance from National to International unity.

*To be continued*

### Like A Stream of Light...

Like a stream of light I rush into You,  
Oh Ocean of light!  
With splendours vast is filled my sight;  
Oh Limitless, True!

The ocean is gleaming vast around;  
Sky-sail gleams white.  
A nameless voyage calls: no sound.  
Looms the Infinite.

A luminosity vast pervades.  
Nor earth nor sky.  
The intimate Inmost invades:  
The silent I.

PRAJARAM

Sri Ramakrishna expressed one of the cardinal truths of the integral spiritual realisation when he said that it is the Mother who holds the key to the abode of Brahman, and unless She delivered it as a Grace none could see Brahman face to face. Sri Ramakrishna's own self-consecration to the Mother was unimpeachable and inviolate to the last day of his life, in spite of his Vedantic initiation and the definitive Vedantic experience of the supreme status of the undifferentiated Absolute. Vaishnava, Tantric, Vedantic, Christian, Moslem, all in one, he remained the Mother's child, divinely free in his unquestioning reliance upon Her guidance and, therefore, intuitively impeccable in all his movements. It was this fact of the absolute reliance of such a spiritual stalwart on the Grace and guidance of the Mother, which startled, baffled and at last conquered the orthodox Vedantin, Totapuri, who, in the inflexible pride of his exclusive monism, had dared to deny and even deride the great Mother. Besides his child-like dependence on the Mother, Sri Ramakrishna's idolatry, his worship of her clay image, not only as a preliminary means to spiritual progress, but even as an indispensable element of the crowning expression of his God-drunk state and highest illumination, flashes a mysterious hint, a bare but very significant hint, of a certain truth which will be apparent to us as we proceed in our consideration of the objectification and individualisation of the Mother's Presence for a radical transformation of our active nature.

The Mother, whom Sri Ramakrishna adored and called Kali, is the supreme Shakti, at once transcendent and universal, who, as the Consciousness-Force of Brahman, creates, constitutes and upholds the worlds by the illimitable might of Her Will and Power, and guides them through various phases of inevitable construction and destruction towards the goal of perfection which She, in Her infinite Love and Knowledge, has decreed for them. She was worshipped by the Vedic seers as Aditi, by the Tantrics as Adyashakti and Mahashakti, and traces of her worship are found in the fading memories of the Babylonian, Egyptian, Assyrian and Chinese traditions of the Mother-cult or the creative feminine principle. Sri Ramakrishna's combination of the Vedanta and the Tantra was a prophetic achievement of supreme importance—it was, in truth, a combination of the Absolute and the cosmic manifestation, of Heaven and Earth, of Spirit and Matter.

Is this transcendent and universal Shakti the Mother to whom we are called upon to surrender? Is She the sole pilot of the Integral Yoga? Were it only so, our Yoga would be identical with the Tantric Yoga and robbed of much of its integrality and characteristic potentiality for physical transformation and divine manifestation; for, the transcendent and universal Mother, as envisaged by Tantra, can release the soul from the bonds of the lower nature and bestow upon it either the status of a masterful universality or of a featureless infinity in the Transcendent; but a divine fulfilment in the terrestrial existence by the transfiguration of even the surface physical being of man and a conquest and conversion of Matter itself is a consummation which demands something more than these two clear-cut poises of the Mother—another and more directly and concretely dynamic poise and power in which She can canalise her victorious Force into the material world and compel and quicken the irresistible germination of a divine race in humanity. It is a poise in the dissolving darkness of the world for the planting of Her highest regenerative and transformative Light, the poise of a special Power for a new creation and a renovation and remoulding of the entire being of man. Unless She assumes upon Herself the discords and disabilities of the material life and descends into the blind abyss of its inconscient origin. Her divine Light cannot grow and glow in this dim waste of terrestrial existence. If the transcendent and universal poises could effect all decisive changes and revolutionary departures in the life of humanity, there would be no need of the Avatar; but that is not how the Mother deals with the evolutionary life of Her children. As the transcendent Shakti, She bears the fiat of the Absolute, as the universal Mahashakti She ploughs and prepares the ground for the working out of the fiat, and by a direct descent and embodiment, She puts on a divine individuality and becomes the focal point of the fructifying fiat, so that the initial step of the intended departure may be securely and irrevocably taken and a definite direction and lead given to the Godward Odyssey of mankind. Her individual poise in the material world is an imperative demand of the logic of physical transformation and divine life. Besides, the aim of the Integral Yoga being the supramental fulfilment of the Divine in man, the infusion of the supramental principle into Matter and the eventual conversion of the material life into supramental life are a work of such immense and intricate difficulties that even the most mighty and daring human effort, though aided and fortified by the universal and transcendent Mother, is powerless to achieve it. The transcendent and universal Mother must come down into the darkness of the material existence, assume a human form, identify Herself with the earth and her children, and, slowly but steadily, leaven them with Her supramental Light and Force. The inauguration of the reign of the Supermind in Matter cannot be done by the mental man, however high his soul may have soared in the realms of the Spirit. It is the incarnate individuality of the Supreme Mother that alone can "tear the covering and shape the vessel and bring down into this world of obscurity and falsehood and death and suffering Truth and Light and Life divine and the immortal's Ananda."\*

\* "The Mother" by Sri Aurobindo.

# THE INTEGRAL YOGA

By RISHA

CHAP.

## THE MOTHER IN I

### The Transcendent Poise

In the supreme Purusha the Mother is, as Chit or Parasamvit, wrapt in an indistinguishable union with Her eternal Consort. Holding infinite potentialities in Herself, she is plunged in the ineffable bliss of Her undifferentiated existence. There is no creation there, not the slightest ripple or vibration of any self-expanding Force—all is in-gathered, mute, still. Even to speak of Her as the Mother is to speak in terms of a later development, to apply an anticipatory epithet. The Mother's highest poise, as we can conceive it, is where She stands, in the timeless silence of the unitary existence, as the luminous link between the unmanifest Absolute and the multitudinous manifestation. She is there as the original, infinite Consciousness-Force, Chit-shakti, bearing in Herself the Supreme Divine as the eternal Sachchidananda and bringing out of Him, in an impeccable harmony of descending hierarchies, the Powers and Principles that sway the varying rhythms and patterns of manifestation and creation. Majestic and august She stands, above Time and Space, above all unity and multiplicity, above the Gods and their orchestral movements, releasing out of the unfathomable abyss of the ultimate Being the infinite possibilities of His self-formulation and self-expression. She is the Matrix and Mother of all that exists in the universe and beyond it, decreeing all that takes place here and elsewhere.

### The Universal Poise

The universal Mother, Mahashakti, stands over the worlds, which She projects out of Herself and dominates and directs all their complex play of manifesting forces. She is concerned with the perfect working out of whatever is transmitted to Her by Her transcendent consciousness from the Absolute. With the assistance of Her emanations that prepare or preside over the large lines of the universal action, She governs the multitudinous movements of the world by the rigour and rectitude of her Laws. The mechanical Nature with which we are all familiar, the aspect of Prakriti, is only the lower executive form of this cosmic Mahashakti. Above the nature of the three gunas or essential modes of terrestrial existence, She moves in the freedom of Her spiritual infinitudes and creates and destroys in the steps of an unfaltering knowledge. Constituting, yet transcending, Prakriti, She determines and over-rules all her operations, all the involved interminglings of her gunas. Her unlimited vision embraces in its sweep at once the ultimate objectives of creation and the minute details of the working of every force and energy, every rule or rhythm, and Her unsleeping Power keeps the cosmic play in perpetual progressive motion and prevents it from tumbling into disintegrating chaos.

"But there are many planes of Her creation, many steps of the Divine Shakti. At the summit of this manifestation of which we are a part, there are worlds of infinite existence, consciousness, force and bliss over which the Mother stands as the unveiled eternal Power. All beings there live and move in an ineffable completeness and unalterable oneness, because She carries them safe in Her arms for ever. Nearer to us are the worlds of a perfect supramental creation in which the Mother is the supramental Mahashakti, a Power of divine omniscient Will and omnipotent Knowledge always apparent in its unfailing works and spontaneously perfect in every process. There all movements are the steps of the Truth; there all beings are souls and powers and bodies of the divine Light; there all experiences are seas and floods and waves of an intense and absolute Ananda."\*

The supramental Mahashakti has manifested four of Her great aspects in Her governance and guidance of our terrestrial existence: one is Her aspect of Maheshwari, another of Mahakali, the third of Mahalakshmi and the fourth of Mahasaraswati.† They correspond more or less approximately with the four aspects of Narayana as described in the Vaishnava Pancharatra—Vasudeva, Shankarshan, Pradyumna and Aniruddha—and can be said to be the primal differentiating terms of the four Varnas or four basic types of human temperament, Brahmin, Kshatriya, Vaishya and Shudra. It is a harmonious establishment of these four aspects of the Supramental Mother in a human being that constitutes the integral perfection and is an essential condition of the divine life in the material world. Maheshwari with her all-illuminating and all-commanding splendour of knowledge, Mahakali with her thunders and lightnings of force, Mahalakshmi with her entrancing and exalting grace and harmony, and Mahasaraswati with her perfection of organisation and execution and her faultless mastery of the science and craft and technique of things found in man the creative fulness of the divine

\* "The Mother" by Sri Aurobindo.

† For further details refer to "The Mother" by Sri Aurobindo.



# OF SRI AUROBINDO

## CHAND

### R VI

## ER TRIPLE POISE

Nature. There are other and higher aspects of the cosmic Mahashakti, but they have not yet stood out and manifested themselves in the terrestrial play; only when the above four have installed themselves in the transformed human nature can they manifest and become dynamic here.

It will have become clear from the above consideration that Sri Aurobindo's conception of the universal Mahashakti and Her principal dynamic aspects and their descent and revelation in man, is characterised by a limpid definiteness, which replaces the usual vagueness and confusion attaching to them, and turns them into distinct, tangible realities indispensable to the perfection of the Integral Yoga. Each aspect represents an essential truth of our being, a potential truth of our seeking and a concrete truth of our ultimate becoming, and all have to be seized and harmonised in an ascending and descending experience, which culminates in the transmutation of the lower nature (Apara Prakriti) into the higher (Para Prakriti). This transmutation is the crux of the whole process of the Integral Yoga and the very pivot of its final aim, and the significance of the absolute surrender to the Mother in Her triple poise comes out clearly as we follow the steps of this radical transmutation. For, who else except the Divine Mother can effect this change of the lower into the higher nature, bestowing upon man the double freedom of self-expression—the freedom of the soul and the freedom of the converted and divinised nature?

### The Individual Poise

The most immediately effective and mysteriously transfiguring poise of the Mother is in Her incarnate individuality. In Her universal poise She acts according to the cosmic Law of Her own creation—She lays the lines, marshals Her energies, develops the stages and leads all things and beings according to their natures to their destined goals; but the exceptional departures, the new original possibilities proceed from the Transcendent, and it is the individual poise of the Mother which, representing the Transcendent, becomes the sole channel of those possibilities as well as of the Will and Grace realising them here. But for this individual embodiment, the transcendent Will would hardly find a means of completely fulfilling itself in the material world. The embodied physical action of the individual poise of the Mother is a constant opportunity to our embodied being to approach and contact the divine Grace and accelerate the pace of our evolution into our dynamic divinity.

The individual divine Mother, at once transcendent and universal in Her consciousness, brings down the transcendent Will to new creation and infuses it into those individual units of humanity who open and surrender to Her in an unquenchable aspiration for becoming Her instruments upon earth.

In the age in which we live, the Will of the Transcendent is, as Sri Aurobindo assures us, the manifestation of the supramental Divine in the material world. The individuality of the Mother, though in full possession of Her transcendence and universality, is the living medium of the supramental Force and Light put out in front for the supramental creation and fulfilment in mankind. The key to the highest spiritual achievement of the modern age is, therefore, in the hands of the Mother, and to be able to receive Her Grace is to qualify for a share in the glory of that consummation.

This brings us to the question of the Avatarhood of God. Each epoch of a crucial turning in the life of humanity is graced by a definite Presence and Power of the Divine, which represents, so to say, the pith and peak of the aim to be realised, the work to be accomplished. That which decrees the specific achievement—and it is always the Will of the Transcendent that does it—descends here into a mortal tabernacle to initiate the work, to furrow the virgin field and sow the golden seed, so that a new era may be ushered in and new possibilities may press towards realisation. Each incarnation has a particular mission to pioneer, and though all incarnations are identical in their origin and essence,—for they are the Transcendent in individual human forms and conscious of their divine Self,—each demands an absolute allegiance and loyalty of his contemporaries for the fulfilment of his particular work in the world\* It will not do to be exclusively attached to Rama in the age of Krishna, for, though Rama and Krishna are the same in essence, each represents a definite, specific work, God's own work, which can be accomplished only if the mind and heart of his age turn devotedly to him and his ideal. This does not mean a scrapping of the other Avatars, but a whole-hearted surrender to the present one, along with a general

adoration of all. Of course, if the aim is to escape out of the world of ignorance and suffering into some beatific Beyond or unite with the Divine in His supracosmic transcendence, the worship of any Avatar is as effective as that of any other; but if the aim is to fulfil the special Will of the Divine in the age to which one belongs, an ungrudging dynamic surrender to the Avatar of that age is the best way to help God's work and further that of all Avatars into the bargain. If there were no truth in the particularity of the Avatar's mission, the very fact of Avatarhood would lose all significance, or one Avatar would be enough for all ages to come.

The individual embodiment of the Mother is the face and front of the Transcendent walking the earth for its deliverance and transformation. It is an embodiment instinct with the force and radiant with the glory of the Supreme, on the one hand, and stamped with the utmost sacrifice of a redeeming love and compassion, on the other. Who else could have entered, except the Mother, into the unplumbed depths of the Inconscient; touched with Her finger "the horror of the falsehood" and consented to work in that "supreme obscurity", so that the divine Light might be kindled even there, and evolution proceed not from nescience, but from consciousness to greater consciousness, trailing joy and freedom and harmony to their highest perfection? "Thou plungest me, O Lord, into the most opaque darkness; it must be then because Thou hast so firmly established Thy light in me that Thou knowest it will stand the perilous test. Hast Thou chosen me for descending into the vortex of this hell as Thy torch-bearer?"\* Such was the prayer the Mother sent up to the Divine from the "vortex of the hell" into which she had descended, and the reply of the Divine rang out clear and categoric, "I have chosen thee from all eternity to be my exceptional representative upon the earth, not in an invisible and hidden way, but in a way apparent to the eyes of all men. And what thou wert created to be thou shalt be."\* "Fight that thou mayst conquer and triumph; struggle to surmount all that has been up to this day, to make the new Light emerge, the new example, which the world needs. Fight stubbornly against all obstacles, outer or inner. This is the pearl without price which is proposed for thee to realise."\* Even so far back as 1915, the Mother knew, not only in the depths of Her being, where She has been fully awake ever since Her early childhood, but in the outer physical being, that "Thy will is that from the heart of this heavy and obscure Matter I must let loose the volcano of Thy Love and Light. It is Thy will that, breaking all old conventions of language, there must arise the right Word to express Thee, the Word that never was heard before; it is Thy will that the integral union should be made between the smallest things below and the sublimest and most vast above; and that is why, O Lord, cutting me off from all religious joy and spiritual ecstasy, depriving me of all freedom to concentrate exclusively on Thee, Thou hast said to me, 'Work as an ordinary man in the midst of ordinary beings; learn to be nothing more than they are in all that is manifesting; associate with the integral way of their being; for, beyond all that they know, all that they are, thou carriest in thyself the torch of the integral splendour which does not waver, and by associating with them, it is this thou wilt carry into their midst.'"\*

This is the work which the Divine Mother has to do upon earth in Her individual poise, a work of infinite labour and toil, carried on from day to day in the teeth of the direst opposition from the forces of darkness and the indifference or cold scepticism ever of those for whose liberation and perfection She toils. Those who have lived at Her feet know what it means for Her, an image of immaculate purity and eternal bliss, to live in the stinking cess-pool of human desires and lusts and passions, surrounded by suffering and obscurity and ugliness, pelted by perversity and stabbed by falsehood—to live in association with greed and treachery and ingratitude, so that little by little, by the irresistible power of Her transforming Love, She may turn the cess-pool into a crystal stream of heavenly waters, and, delivering man from the yoke of ignorance and cleansing him of all impurities, transfer him into the arms of the Divine. And yet those who know Her know nothing of the work She has been doing, behind the veil, deep in the pit, far in the backwoods, where the aboriginal appetites of the animal man seethe and surge, and the inertia and insensibility of Matter hold undisputed sway. None can measure the patience, the loving solicitude, the unwearied forbearance and the calm, clairvoyant certitude with which She has been transmuting the subterranean bases of human existence and nature in order that one day man may grow unimpeded into his regal godhead and the face of the earth beam with the beauty and bliss of the Divine.

The supreme Mother in Her individual poise is closest and easiest of access to our physical being, whose transformation and conversion is the most important condition of supramental manifestation. In the Integral Yoga no spiritual experience is counted for much unless it is translated into the terms of the physical being and rivetted and revealed in its outer nature and action. The Mother's physical Presence and contact, surcharged with the supramental Light and Force, and Her constant control and guidance, elimination of evil and dispensation of Grace, are a guarantee of the ultimate victory of the Spirit over Matter; for who can resist the Power of Her to whom the Divine has said, "Art thou not myself crystallised for my work?"† "The Divine has to put on humanity in order that the human being may rise to the Divine."‡

\* Compare the words of Jesus Christ, "I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved."

\* "Prayers and Meditations of the Mother."  
† "Prayers and Meditations of the Mother."  
‡ "Letters on the Mother" by Sri Aurobindo.

# MAHA DEVI VARMA AND THE VALE OF TEARS

By D. V. K. RAGHAVACHARI

An important feature of modern Hindi poetry is a note of lyric sadness. The manifold unfolding of the country's enthusiasm for the new life was curbed in her prime by the frustrating realisation of her political serfdom. An unaccountably distant force was obscuring with frozen fingers the awakening transparencies of her soul. She gave a cry of despair and the cry melted into pathetic song. There was disillusionment, frustration and perhaps, even a sense of helpless reconciliation. But there was unrest in the seething hearts of the millions and the poets sang in elegiac strains mingled with indignant melancholy. The Vale of Tears, the Shadow of Death, the Bed of Thorns, The Rat's Alley entered into modern Indian poetry. The Indian song was as a result flooded by pity and pathos.

The humid beauty of tragedy has had an unrelenting appeal for the human heart. In fact Bhavabhuti went to the extent of describing *Karuna* as the cardinal Rasa. The sweetest songs are those that tell of the saddest tales. The haunting moan of the dove overwhelms the unceasing joy of the nightingale. In the deep inner gaze of the mind across the drowned translucencies of experience the eternal spirit of the Universe reveals itself; tears chasten our mortal passion;

*Girdhar Gopal is mine, and none else,  
I have left mother, father and brother;  
In company of saints, I have lost all sense of shame.  
I run to welcome saints; I weep looking at the world.  
I have reared the immortal creeper of Bhakti, watering it with  
tears of love.  
(Mirabai)*

The pathos of the ages, the anguish of myriad hearts, the despair of recollected joy and the ecstasy of infinite longing are all reflected in a single tear:

*Tears, idle tears, I know not what they mean,  
Tears from the depth of some divine despair  
Rise in the heart, and gather to the eyes,  
In looking on the happy autumn-fields,  
And thinking of the days that are no more. (Tennyson).*

Thus pathos is a mood that easily lends itself to mystic ecstasy and in the poetry of Srimati Maha Devi Varma the mild-minded melancholy leaps into incandescent rhythms. Her *Nihar*, *Rashmi*, *Niraja*, *Dipshikha*, *Sandhya Geet* and *Yama* are "invariably dominated by an intense longing for the spiritual ideal which is the basis of mysticism in all religions."

The theme that constantly recurs in her poetry is the immense separation between life and the unknown. In the conflict of ideas and in the clash of events, present life is disintegrating but the Life-Force is expanding with new energy in many directions. Factual experience is tantalisingly circumscribed by the impersonal ideal. Between the molecular life on earth and the elemental unknown of the cosmos there is an alluring mirage that makes initiative attractive and adventurous but throws all effort into a gasping failure. The longing becomes more acute:

*Oh Friend, I am mad with love; none knows my anguish.  
There, on the points of spikes lies my bed; how can I sleep?  
The bed of the dear one is spread in Heaven; how can I  
..... meet him?  
Only he who has had a wound can know the plight of the  
wounded, or else he who has dealt the blow.  
Only a jeweller can know the secrets of a jeweller or else the  
jewel itself.  
Smitten with pain I roam about the forests; physician I have  
found none.  
The pain of Mira will vanish, O Lord, when acts the physician.  
(Mirabai)*

But very soon failure is forgotten and man begins where he has ended—but he has nevertheless covered a considerable distance that can be measured in terms of spiritual progress. The mystic poet contemplates this distance between the Infinite and himself by means of a rainbow—a confluence of varying colours drawn from experience and moistened by a sense of ecstatic wonder—the story of *Viraha*:

*Life is the Lotus-flower of Parting,—  
The Lotus-flower of Parting  
Budding in pangs of Pain  
And blooming in fields of Pity.  
Daylight gathers while tranquil night  
Counts the tears it sheds abundant.  
Life is the Lotus-flower of Parting.*

Maha Devi Varma feels that separation is inherent in her birth itself:

*For whom Estrangement a birth became—  
I am but your own breath!*

Divinity has itself happily blundered into life "trailing clouds of glory":

*Straying from somewhere  
Here by mischance I came.*

But human life is to her a tale of unending lament:

*The flower blooms to fade,  
The moon rises to sink,  
The cloud fills to empty,  
The flame burns to vanish:  
For who has here perpetual youth?  
Life is short, uncertain!*

Nevertheless it is in the vibrant heart of tears that "the lavish lights and floating shades of the full-flowing harmony" coil into the Life Divine:

*The undying process of the Universe:  
In one extinction a thousand blessings—  
Never has even the fading breath  
Of a single atom run to vacuity;  
Even in failure a perfect evolution.*

Adversity is the touchstone of character. Sorrow is ennobling. Tear-washed the soul shines with a still beatitude. By pity surrender becomes possession, captivity becomes conquest:

*In surrender am I made  
The Queen of these my bonds!*

If sorrow has such a chastening influence it is welcome. Let the Crown of Thorns be made the symbol of devotion:

*In suffering I did seek you  
And suffering I shall seek in you!*

The image is owned, adored, dreamed upon with the undying passion of a bride:

*My sighs beneath these lips  
Fall asleep. The senseless pangs  
Piercing me mad are all I have.*

The cosmic life is made to glow in the electronic stream of tears till the various components of its individuality are studied, memorised and recited into a mystic chant:

*Dwell in the depths of the heart  
Under the veil of sorrow;  
And in the quest for you  
I shall know each atom!*

Let there be longing for ever and let there be a sense too of separation, of things ever yet to be attained lest the longing cease:

*Between the twin banks of perpetual meeting  
And perpetual parting let my life  
Be a rippling river. Let ever in humid embrace  
Each moment unite the parting shores.  
Like as the steady horizon  
Be near apparent to life!  
But all attempts to grasp at you  
May fade and faint and fail!*

Such a hide-and-seek life is perhaps more exciting and satisfying than the limited perfection of some static heaven:

*In the ever-ever Land of Angels  
Are they gifted with Thy mercy?  
Take not from me, my lord,  
My right of dwindling away.*

Death can be a privilege and life garlanded with tears; then raise a sanctuary for these passionate angels in the heart of hearts. Forever there be pity, forever pining and longing:

*Give me in my little life  
Not a drop of quick-satiety;  
Unquenched my thirsty eyes  
Be filling a sea of tears.*

Maha Devi Varma is regarded by some as the Mira of modern Hindi literature. Pity is the core of her songs:

*Pity is the core of my life,  
I am the tryst of ever-lasting joy;  
Washed in her absorbing flames  
I am a seraph of tender wax,*

Maha Devi is unique in her rounded, mellifluous and tenderly feminine melodies. Her lyrics almost fling us into a world of perfect rhythms and sudden pictures:

*Slowly, O slowly, from the horizon  
Come descending, gently, O gently!  
O Night of Spring!  
New-braided your starry tresses  
With a crescent-flower nestling,  
Veiled in a light of spotless white,  
Trailing in your twinkling looks  
A host of pearls resplendent,  
Slowly, O slowly, from the horizon  
Come descending, gently, O gently!  
O Night of Spring!*



# BOOKS in the BALANCE

## AUDEN: POET AND PREACHER

### AUDEN: INTRODUCTORY ESSAY

by Richard Hoggart

(Chatto & Windus, 12s. 6d.)

Next only to Eliot, Mr. W. H. Auden has for over two decades exercised a potent influence on English poets. He has had his allegiances and his affiliations; he has "led" a group, he has collaborated with brother poets, he has played the careering Achilles in Spain and the sulking Achilles in New York—yet, all the time, he has been himself, he has been fearlessly true to himself. Educated at Gresham's School, Holt, and Christ Church College, he found his voice and vocation early. At the age of 20, while still at Oxford, he edited *Oxford Poetry* with Cecil Day Lewis. By 1930, the Auden-Cecil Day Lewis-Spender constellation sprang into full view on the English poetic firmament. They were the "new" poets: disciples, so to say, of Eliot, Owen, Hopkins, Donne; poetic revolutionaries,—almost political poets brandishing a red banner! When Eliot turned from allusive poetry to dramatic verse, Auden took the hint and in collaboration with Mr. Isherwood produced three plays, *The Dog Beneath the Skin*, *The Ascent of F6*, and *Journey to a War*. Presently, Mussolini, Hitler, Franco and the rest of them compelled Auden's political views to suffer something of a sea-change. The war came; Hell was enacted; and the old certainties seemed certainties no more. Isherwood became a Vedantin; Spender retreated in alarm from the shrine of the Communist God; Cecil Day Lewis became Professor of Poetry at Oxford; and Auden became a naturalized American and an Assistant Professor of English Literature at the Ann Arbor University at Michigan.

These biographical details—meagre and even, in a way, meaningless though they are—serve in some measure to intrigue and tantalize us. But while poetolatry is no doubt interesting, poetry is the real thing, and in Mr. Richard Hoggart's book we have an authoritative study of Auden's poetry which is very welcome indeed. It is a scholarly work, but it has no forbidding heaviness about it. There are no esoteric mists, no Serbonian bogs, to confuse the reader. Auden's poetical works are studied at once chronologically to illustrate the development of his technique and the movement of his ideas, and also subject-wise to enable us to infer the manifoldness of his vision, the anguished and purposeful waywardness of his poetic sensibility. During the twenty years of his profession of poetry, Auden has ranted and mimicked and burlesqued and prophesied by turns—but there has never been any moment when either his intelligence was atrophied or his blood-streams were cold. His failures, whether of technique or of ideation, were alike the products of his integrity and vitality. Through all the vicissitudes, the Auden of *The Age of Anxiety* and *The Enchafed Flood* remains the Auden of the nineteen thirties.

It was Auden's misfortune to have come of age during the between-the-wars week-end. He could not escape the ambiguous challenge of that twilight hour of uneasy peace. The human situation haunted him—it was ugly, unreal, yet luridly real also, and unescapable. Seeing what he saw, feeling as he did, he couldn't simply sing of roses and lilies and cuckoos and apple-orchards and autumn evenings. Civilization was diseased, no doubt; but the remedy? Was there a remedy? Wouldn't the remedy render the disease more diseased still? Was it wise to "take arms against a sea of troubles"—or just to commit hara kiri? No wonder, Auden constantly experimented—no wonder, again, he seemed to change colour chameleon-like. That was the price he had to pay—that is the price he still pays—for his integrity and the vitality of the current of his ideas.

Mr. Hoggart correctly diagnoses the causes of Auden's seemingly lessening popularity: "the change of country, the change of subject, and the constant experimenting." Yet the man himself is unchanged; and his intellect is as sharp as ever, and his pity and charity remain unexhausted. His poetry at its best is a great humanizing force—and that is why it will live.

K. R. SRINIVASA IYENGAR.

## TWO NEW NOVELS

### THE END OF THE AFFAIR

by Graham Greene (Heinemann, 10s. 6d.)

### THE MAN ON THE PIER

by Julia Strachey (Llehmann, 10s. 6d.)

Love: A hackneyed theme; also, apparently, an inexhaustible theme. Man, woman, and (the apex of the 'triangle') the "other" man, the lover: it is an old pattern, yet every time it is drawn anew, it has a piquancy all its own. Mr. Graham Greene's new novel is about lust turning to hate, and lust and hate later fusing into love. Miss Strachey's novel—the first after ever so many years—is about lust, and perhaps the implied derogation of its naked violence is meant to insinuate the glory of true love. Brilliantly written, both novels tackle the problem of sex without inhibitions; and being novels about adults, they are also meant for adults. Civilization and excessive sophistication have a lot to answer for: the best of us are often no better than the worst of us once the Maginot Line of our normal defences is pierced by an unexpected turn of events. Pride is ever a dangerous phantom, and intellectual pride is especially a sure prelude to discomfiture and even to irremediable disaster.

*The End of the Affair* is told by the 'hero', Maurice Bendrix, partly in the first person, and partly by means of extracts from the diary of Sarah Miles, his mistress. Maurice had first merely played with her affections: he would 'pump' her and get to know something about her husband, the efficient civil servant; Maurice was thus a novelist in search of 'copy'—no more and no less! But soon Maurice the novelist was exceeded by Maurice the infatuated and insanely jealous lover. When Sarah suddenly broke away from him, Maurice's love—or infatuation—turned to hatred. Who was the new man? Months pass; and the husband himself consults Maurice (of all persons!) about employing a detective to watch his wife's movements. Although later the husband changes his mind, Maurice goes to the detective and asks him to find out the new lover. A veritable Gilbertian situation: and the action now races through a series of misunderstandings and delayed actions to Sarah's tragic death. In the end, husband and lover set up house together, each treasuring Sarah's memory in his own way. Bendrix is an unpleasant character—he is meant to be one, and he is one. Sarah is an interesting character. She would rather love God, but her resolutions—her prayers—are in vain. She writes at the end of her diary in despair: "I want Maurice. I want corrupt human love. Dear God, you know I want to want Your pain, but I don't want it now." But need love of God mean necessarily pain? Couldn't it be—isn't it essentially—pure delight?

Miss Strachey's novel takes us to an English country house, whereas Mr. Greene's is permeated by the atmosphere of London. But, ultimately, it is not the atmosphere that determines the action but individual man. Temptations from others, the influence of the environment,—these at best are catalytic agents. The battle is, in the final analysis, fought and decided within the human soul. Ned Moon thinks that, at the age of forty-one, he is an 'integrated man'. He compares his state to the Wordsworthian "stationary blast of waterfalls"... 'a kind of tranquillity in motion'. Yet, a very short time afterwards, he is wildly, madly, enamoured of his friend and colleague's wife, Marina. It is the insanest lust—primordial, unchartered. It begins, apparently, with his dreaming of Marina; but the dream could have no more than rendered articulate his unconscious desires. A young man's infatuation is material for romance; an old man's infatuation is the raw stuff of comedy; but the infatuation of a middle-aged man is instinct with tragedy. At the last moment, however, Ned turns back—"It couldn't be done." He has in a way saved himself, but his arrogance is shattered. He moans: "What makes this world so dreary is that for the individual there is no direction, almost no direction he can move." But does one find one's direction merely by railing at the Cosmos? Isn't it because we are spiritually blind that we ever miss the pointer readings?

Both novels are examples of adroit 'technique' and are fictional slants on the malady of modern civilization. Behind the surface humour and irony there lies a hard core of earnestness as well—which one hopes the reader will not miss.

K. S. SRINIVASA IYENGAR.

## Thoughts At Dawn

The dreadful hours when man called not for help  
But went to sleep with Death as concubine,  
And in one fatal slip forgot his self,  
Are over; Dawn writes her gold epic line  
And there in moved ether and in wide ocean  
A cosmic heart beholds the Revelation.

RANJU.

## NEW TRENDS IN WESTERN THOUGHT

## HAVE WE REALISED ALL THAT EVOLUTION IMPLIES?

By G. N. M. TYRELL

*The Hibbert Journal*

The discovery of the principle of evolution was one of the greatest achievements of science. But have scientists—even those who have advocated and expounded the principle—fully grasped the consequences of the discovery? It was not so much an achievement of scientific technique as of synthetic thinking; indeed, it has been questioned whether Darwin was altogether a scientist according to modern standards. His discoveries were not the product of a cut and dried technique of quantitative analysis, which plunges as soon as possible into mathematics. They were the result of wide observation of a synthetic rather than an analytical kind. In these modern times of highly developed specialisation, Darwin might almost be regarded as a non-specialist.

In dealing with any wide and general principle, the non-specialist has one great advantage. He can take a comprehensive view of the whole situation, as if it were an aerial picture; while the specialist, immersed in masses of detail, is obliged to remain on the ground. It is from the point of view of the non-specialist that the suggestions in this article are put forward.

Although in the wider sense it was science which discovered the principle of evolution, it does not appear that scientists have realised the full consequences of the discovery nor seen what tremendous light it throws on the situation of the human race. Followed through to the end, it surely provides the key to the human situation.

The principal result of organic evolution was to cause living beings to become adapted to their environment; and the fact of adaptation does not in itself depend on any evolutionary theory, for it can be established by contemporary observation. But no one today doubts the evolutionary causes which lie behind it. It is not the causes of evolution, however, which stand out in high relief when seen from the non-specialist's point of view: it is rather its consequences. So far as human beings are concerned, evolutionary adaptation has had vastly important consequences. And adaptation itself contains a factor which hides the more important of these consequences from view.

As seen from our present standpoint, the outstanding question which evolution presents is this: How far was adaptation to environment carried in the case of man? Did it cease at some arbitrary point, leaving part of him unadapted? If so, where did it cease? The cogent question concerns the human mind. Was it, too, adapted to its environment with all the thoroughness and subtle finesse which we find in the human body? There is a curious anomaly here. Why is it that the human body is widely accepted as an adapted instrument while it is generally assumed that human reason and judgement are immaculate and not a product of adaptation to circumstances? If man as a whole was adapted to this world, how did his mind escape the formative process which reveals itself so clearly in the adaptation of the body? Surely we cannot escape from the conclusion that evolution shaped the human being as a whole.

If this be accepted, few discoveries can have more far-reaching consequences. If, during the long process of evolution, the mind of man was adapted to its environment, then the character of that mind must be highly specialised. And it is pertinent to ask what consequences this specialisation has had on science, philosophy and speculative thought in general. That there are certain

specialised characteristics of the human mind has been recognised by psychologists. Perhaps C. G. Jung has come nearer than anyone else to the idea that the racial mind of man has a pattern as a whole and is therefore to some extent specialised. But even Jung does not appear to have recognised the full consequences of mental evolution as it appears from the detached, non-specialist view-point.

The effects of mental evolution, once they are admitted, are indeed startling. We habitually take it for granted that our judgement and our powers of assessment are impartial, centrally poised and undeflected by any factors inherent in the mind. A shock overtakes us when we begin to realise that this uncritical assumption is itself a consequence of mental adaptation. We begin to see that the assumption is untrue: but it has been introduced into our minds in such a fashion that we accept it without being aware that we are doing so. This is precisely the way in which nature adapted our minds in order that they should act successfully in their special environment. Once we see the full consequences of evolution, we realise that the way in which we judge and assess things in ordinary life cannot be free. Against this suggestion the mind at once rises in rebellion. It insists on maintaining that it is a "free thinker." We say that we feel we are free: we know we are free. But, if we take tight hold of ourselves and reflect calmly and incisively, we begin to recognise that this very rebellion is one of the features of the adapted mind. It is an illusion to suppose that we think without bias: but it is an illusion which is essential for confidence and peace of mind in everyday life. Therefore it has been imposed upon us.

The rebellious mind, however, proceeds to reinforce itself with argument. If our ordinary intelligence—our common sense, let us call it—were constrained or tampered with or unfree, how could its judgements be so successful? Surely this is a pragmatic argument which proves that common sense is not deflected or tainted by any subtle bias. Steady insight again pierces through this argument. The success of common sense is due to the very fact that the mind has been adapted. It thinks and judges, not with untrammelled freedom, but in the particular ways that lead to practical success. For the external world is presented in a highly simplified edition and not as it really is. And this has been achieved by the specialised mind and specialised senses acting in conjunction.

We cavil at this idea. At any rate we feel compelled to take up the cudgels in defence of reason. When, in the course of evolution, we left the level of animal instinct we rose to a level of clear vision and rational thinking of an unerring kind. Nothing, we say, interferes to vitiate our reason: it is perfect in principle and untainted in essence. It is centrally poised and free. How absurd to suggest that the forces of evolution reached upwards and distorted the processes of the human intellect.

But here again we need calm judgement. Can it really be maintained that our bodies were bequeathed to us by the animal world, while our minds descended to us from heaven? We cannot accept the principle of evolution and then arrest it at the point we choose. We must either reject it wholly or else follow its consequences to the end.

The animal world is guided by instinct: and it is unquestionable

that we human beings have inherited instincts from them. "There is no intelligence in which some traces of instinct are not to be discovered, more especially no instinct that is not surrounded by a fringe of intelligence."<sup>1</sup> What is more natural, under the circumstances, than that instinct and intelligence should be intertwined? And, if they are intertwined, intelligence must, at least at times, be controlled by instinct. Instinct is defined as innate impulse: that is to say it is something that acts unconsciously. What, then, is to prevent instinctive premises from being unconsciously introduced into the processes of reasoning? This would be the most natural way of adapting our minds to their environment: and this, it is here maintained, is precisely what happened during the course of human evolution. The reasoning process itself may be untampered with; but it would nevertheless arrive at conclusions which were inherent in the supplied premises. This possibility should surely be studied with the utmost care. Why has so little inquiry been made into the question of the adapted character of the mind? Obviously because natural instincts persuade the mind that there is nothing to be examined.

In the course of this brief article, it is not possible to trace the ramifications of mental adaptation or to do more than touch lightly upon the evidence for its operation in different departments of human life. A closer study would bring out the fact that the situation is complex: for consciousness operates at different levels, and it is only at one level that it is wholly under the sway of adaptive instincts.

If we glance at the mind as it is operating at a lowly level, we shall see mental adaptation at work, causing the mind to co-operate with the senses. When we look at a scene, the bare sense-data constitute a medley of coloured patches, which change like the pattern in a kaleidoscope. If this bare pattern were all, the visual world would be no more than a confusing patch-work: it would not be simple enough for action. But the mind, in the form of instinct, comes to the rescue of the eye and transforms the medley of coloured patches into a group of separate objects. A house, for example, which as sense-data is a mere group of coloured patches, stands out as one complete object. It is given as having even a back and an inside, which do not figure among the sense-data provided by the eyes.

But adaptive instinct follows the mind to much higher levels. A very remarkable fact illustrates this. Why is it that the less we think about the world around us the simpler and more obviously comprehensible it becomes? To the wayfaring man, the physical world presents no difficulties of a permanently puzzling kind. This is not because there are no such difficulties. The farmer, the carpenter, the mason, the mechanic, go forward in their work with perfect confidence: no perplexing problems that they cannot solve arise to bring them to a halt. At first this does not strike us as being remarkable; but that is because our minds are adapted as well as theirs. Nature contrived that there should be no arresting difficulties in practical life. She did it partly by the design of the sense-organs and partly by making certain things appear instinctively obvious to the mind. The external world is, in fact, full of

puzzling complexities and difficulties as scientists and philosophers know well. But from the practical level of the mind they have been artificially hidden. The farmer knows "all about" soils: the carpenter knows "all about" woods: the mechanic knows "all about" metals and so on. "All about" that is to say, for practical purposes. *Instinct arrests all questions at this level* and so gives the world the appearance of being final. But when the scientists begin to investigate this world, its finality drops away. It must surely have been a convenient illusion. The appearance of converging towards finality is characteristic of all our practical knowledge. This is a skillfully contrived appearance—a product of mental adaptation.

If we ask whether our minds become free when they rise to the level of reflection, and leave the level of practical action, the answer must be that even then they are not wholly free. The physicist rises to the level of reflection. He asks questions that the practically indoctrinated level of the mind cannot ask. Consequently for him the apparent finality of the world disappears. Matter reveals itself as an atomic structure: atomic structure leads to fields of force: fields of force demand an aether: the atoms break up into smaller particles which cease to be particles in the sense understood by the practical mind: the aether then fades away and merges into a conception of space-time which cannot be expressed in words. *Convergence has lapsed into divergence.* Clearly, then, the world as presented to us in ordinary life is an artificial construction—a product of combined bodily and mental evolution. The conviction that we are looking at a purely objective world, in the sense that we see it exactly as it is (necessary as this is for practical success) is an illusion fostered by the adapted mind.

This illusion, however, does not bring up the controversy between philosophical idealism and realism. The essence of the physical world may be independent of ourselves. The point is that our minds present us with a specially edited view of it. In order to see clearly what our world is like and what our situation is in the universe, we should begin by looking *within*. We should insist on becoming aware of the instincts which build up the picture we so naively take for granted. We should realise that there is a limited area within which the mind has been pre-adapted to its surroundings, and that some problems lie within this area while others lie outside it.

These instincts of the practical mind dog us and rise to levels of consciousness which are engaged in reflective thought. But as they rise they thin out. The higher the level of awareness, the less hold the adapted instincts have. The field of science is, however, permeated by instinctive factors of the adapted kind; for science has been correctly defined as "organised common sense." Common sense is, indeed, its primary tool; but it adopted it without first subjecting it to any critical examination. Therefore the peculiarities of common sense, imposed during evolution, continue to dominate its conclusions. These peculiarities render science admirably successful within the field of mental adaptation, which covers the field of applied science and the earlier exploratory field. But it is lamentably at sea when it passes beyond the area within which adaptation holds. Scientific methodology is shaped and limited by the adapted characteristics of the human body and mind: yet scientists never appear to take this fact into account. Science is

Continued on page 11

<sup>1</sup> Henri Bergson, "Creative Evolution", p. 142.



# THE FEAST OF LIGHTS BY NOLINI KANTA GUPTA

Dewali — Diwali — Dipavali — The Feast of Lights. A beautiful name for a beautiful festival. And a name that means what it says. It is a dark night. The moon has disappeared. For it is the new moon — a new moon announcing the longer and longer nights of the winter months. An appropriate and auspicious hour indeed to call for the light and cherish its warmth. The experience and aspiration of our Northern forefathers have permeated the life and culture of the whole country and although we may not dwell today in the same latitudes and may not feel physically what those elders felt, yet the ceremonies have not lost their significance for us too, because they embody eternal and universal truths. "Lead us from Darkness to Light" is a human prayer, a yearning common to all latitudes and altitudes. In these dark cold nights let all the fires be kindled, all the lamps lighted. Let the Python that swallows the sun, the Demon that vomits out obscurity be worsted in battle and cut to pieces. We light the altar of victory with a hundred, a thousand lights.

The festival marks also in some parts of India (Gujarat, for example) the end of the year. We bid farewell to the passing year and prepare to welcome the coming year. The light that illumined yesteryear is gone, but we relume the light that will shine on our way in the year that follows. It is the day of transit, otherwise, of entombment and resurrection. On this eve of the new year, we ring out the old and ring in the new. We meet and rejoice, greet each other with the happiest and sincerest laughter our souls are capable of in this unhappy world. And that is why in South India we celebrate the day by putting on new clothes. Indeed we celebrate another day by welcoming "New Food" (navanna) i.e. fresh crop food. Evidently we also knew how to live fairly and squarely. We were not always or all of us mere star-gazers and transcendent philosophers. New garments, fresh food were dear to us. We were worshippers of a radiant life, life brimful of light.

This also is the day when we worship Kali. It is a remarkable characteristic of the soil of Bengal, perhaps, that whenever it is in the least possible it turns a ceremony or a festival into the worship of the Mother. And on this day it is Kali, the Terrible Mother, who is chosen. Who then is this dark Mother? Is she Hecate or a godhead of the primitive and aboriginal races? Is she a real Goddess or only some demon which the ignorant populace have idolised out of a brain fever? . . . She is worshipped in the darkest hours (usually after midnight) of a wholly dark night. She embodies as it were Darkness whole and entire. She hides the light totally within herself or is it because she dazzles our mortal sight by her supernal light that she appears black to us? Kali or Shyama, she is dark, for she presides over our dark days. And today on the earth we are indeed in the darkest of days. Whatever little lamps we have in our consciousness, let us light them, hold them up as our sincerest offering. The call be answered. The Light of lights — *jyotisham jyotih* — will come. She is the Mother of lights, Dipanwita (as the festival is otherwise and more familiarly known in Bengal).

It is now just a fortnight, on the full moon day, we worshipped Lakshmi. She is the white Mother — the Mother embodying, frankly and palpably, love and beauty and grace. But this dark one? Human ignorance and imagination, apprehension and expectation seem to have considerably falsified and mutilated the true aspect of this personality of the Divine Mother. It is however the Mother of Ramakrishna and Vivekananda whose testimony rings still within living memory. And then here is Sri Aurobindo's unravelling of the mystery:

"Mahakali is of another nature. Not wideness but height, not wisdom but force and strength are her peculiar power. There is in her an overwhelming intensity, a mighty passion of force to achieve, a divine violence rushing to shatter every limit and obstacle. All her divinity leaps out in a splendour of tempestuous action; she is there for swiftness, for the immediately effective process, the rapid and direct stroke, the frontal assault that carries everything before it. Terrible is her face to the Asura, dangerous and ruthless her mood against the haters of the Divine; for she is the Warrior of the World who never shrinks from the battle. Intolerant of imperfection, she deals roughly with all in man that is unwilling and she is severe to all that is obstinately ignorant and obscure; her wrath is immediate and dire against treachery and falsehood and malignity, ill-will is smitten at once by her scourge. Indifference, negligence and sloth in the divine work she cannot bear and she smites awake at once with sharp pain, if need be, the untimely slumberer and the loiterer. The impulses that are swift and straight and frank, the movements that are unreserved and absolute, the aspiration that mounts in flame are the motion of Mahakali. Her spirit is tameless, her vision and will are high and far-reaching like the flight of an eagle, her feet are rapid on the upward way and her hands are outstretched to strike and to succour. For she too is the Mother and her love is as intense as her wrath and she has a deep and passionate kindness. When she is allowed to intervene in her strength, then in one moment are broken like things without consistence the obstacles that immobilise or the enemies that assail the seeker. If her anger is dreadful to the hostile and the vehemence of her pressure painful to the weak and timid, she is loved and worshipped by the great, the strong and the noble; for they feel that her blows beat what is rebellious in their material into strength and perfect truth, hammer straight what is wry and perverse and expel what is impure or defective. But for her what is done in a day might have taken centuries; without her Ananda might be wide and grave or soft and sweet and beautiful but would lose the flaming joy of its most absolute intensities. To knowledge she gives a conquering might, brings to beauty and harmony a high and mounting movement and imparts to the slow and difficult labour after perfection an impetus that multiplies the power and shortens the long way. Nothing can satisfy her that falls short of the supreme ecstasies, the highest heights, the noblest aims, the largest vistas. Therefore with her is the victorious force of the Divine and it is by grace of her fire and passion and speed if the great achievement can be done now rather than hereafter."—(THE MOTHER).

## HAVE WE REALISED ALL THAT EVOLUTION IMPLIES?—Continued from page 10

investigating the world, therefore, from a *special* and not from a *general* standpoint. When this comes home to us, the inadequacy of the cosmic outlook which has arisen from science is plainly seen. The scientist is not aware when he crosses the boundary within which the mind has been adapted; nor does he realise that it is that very adaptation which guarantees his success within that boundary.

What, from our present point of view, is so instructive in physics is the perpetual search for a single, basic entity which, when found, will enable the whole physical structure to be finally explained. This search has gone on all through the history of physics and has been continually disrupted by fresh discoveries. This is a clear example of the behaviour of the adapted mind. Because all problems which are wholly contained within the area of adaptation are *convergent*, the physicist, using his tool of common sense, believes convergence to be universal. He does not realise that outside the area of adaptation problems become *divergent*. In other words, the competence of the human intellect is limited and is also of a special nature, and it is part of the adaptation of the intellect that the fact of its adaptation should be concealed from it.

Two results of mental adaptation, which are of primary importance, must be briefly mentioned. One is that the adapted mind has been instinctively made to appear to be *all-inclusive*. The reason for the apparent simplicity is obvious; but it is not so obvious why the sense-world should be made to appear to include everything there is. But it

is a corollary of the first appearance. If it were not instinctively obvious to the human mind that the world it lives in comprises all that exists, the simplicity of that world would vanish. For the world would appear with ragged edges. Questions arising in it would wander off, unsolved, into the blue and nothing would be clear-cut and wholly intelligible. Confidence would be destroyed. Therefore the instinct that the visible world includes everything penetrates every department of intellectual thought. We instinctively postulate that the cause of everything *must* lie within the visible world, and we strenuously reject any suggestion that forces may be acting into our world from without. That is why the evidence, strong though it is, for such a faculty as telepathy is accepted so grudgingly; and why all kinds of fantastic and grotesque terrestrial explanations are provided (as in psychology) for the universal experiences of religion. The one thing that this instinct prevents us from realising is that reality is continuous, extending away beyond our ken; and that by means of our body we are constructed so that we can perceive no more than a special corner of it. Even that corner is presented in a specialised manner. The boundary of this corner is subjective, like the horizon at sea.

The whole of our modern outlook upon the universe is thus riddled with the results of adapted instincts. At first sight it may seem that the view that the human mind is a product of evolution crabs and degrades the human being. But this is not so. In reality it has the opposite effect; *for the whole mind is not adapted.*

The mind is not a solid block but is a continuum more like a band on the spectrum. Only one section of the continuum falls completely within the range of adaptation. The higher levels are only partially subject to its influence: and beyond our normal consciousness, the mind appears to be wholly unadapted. There it is wholly free. If this were not so we should never be able to realise that we are adapted. Specialisation goes with adaptation; and specialisation implies limitation and segregation. There must therefore be more of the conscious self than falls within the adapted area. The adapted portion of us cannot be the whole. Introspection shows that we are constantly changing our level of consciousness, moving, as it were, up and down the spectrum. When solely concentrated upon action, we are wholly in the grip of adaptation. But we can move upwards when we wish, becoming in the process more and more highly aware. A high level of awareness is usually called "intuition." The mystic is probably free from the clutch of instinct; but intuition at a lower grade than this has been responsible for most of the advances that the intellect has made. Intellectual progress has not been advanced to any extent by syllogistic thinking or by following the laws of logic, but by the "new" that flashes into the elevated mind.

"Instinct, intuition or insight is what first leads to the beliefs which subsequent reason confirms or confutes; but the confirmation, where it is possible, consists, in the last analysis, of agreement with other beliefs no less instinctive. Reason is a harmonising, controlling force ra-

ther than a creative once. Even in the most purely logical realm, it is insight that first arrives at what is new."<sup>1</sup>

To the adapted mind, on the level at which it is ruled by instinct, everything the world presents appears unquestionable: it obviously *must* be as it is. But as the mind rises and frees itself from the thralldom of instinct, niches appear which afford a hold for questions. Consciousness awakes and intellectual progress begins. Science, by naively taking over the adapted instincts, has thrown the modern view of the universe into a false perspective. Every question, every problem that arises is instinctively drawn into the sense-world and fitted, by hook or by crook, with an explanation which lies wholly within that world. Where this is palpably impossible, the issue is ignored or labelled "meaningless." Hence the modern conception of the cosmos has become narrower and narrower. Positivism, inspired by science, leading to Logical Positivism, illustrates this. Our general conceptions have become more and more artificial, further and further removed from reality because at the root of all non-intuitive thinking lie driving forces which derive from the instincts of the adapted mind. To this it will probably be answered: Not at all. The unparalleled success of science has long ago vindicated its methods and shown them to be universally applicable and infallible. But it is ironical that this very success, confined to a limited area, is due to the fact that the human mind is adapted!

<sup>1</sup> Bertrand Russell, "Mysticism and Logic", p. 13.



# IS LOGICAL POSITIVISM LOGICAL AND POSITIVE?

By K. D. SETHNA

The following note was first published in the Delhi Weekly THOUGHT in which, on August 24, had appeared an article by Jyotishwarup Saxena expounding very sympathetically the doctrine that goes by the name of Logical Positivism. A comment from the editorial staff had endorsed the exposition and even gone beyond it in recommending the doctrine. As neither writer had seemed aware of any genuine criticism to which Logical Positivism has been subjected by various thinkers, a short general corrective was clearly in order.

Logical Positivism is beginning to attract some Indian minds which are under the impression that it speaks with a firm and convincing voice and that the only objection possible to it is its subversion of "desirable beliefs". The mere "dangerousness" of a doctrine is, of course, no valid ground for intellectual rejection of it. But it is a mistake to believe that a voice both firm and convincing issues from Logical Positivism.

There was a time when the Vienna Circle of Schlick, Neurath and Carnap seemed to be a strangle-hold on all thought that went beyond the evidence of the senses. Talk about the soul, God or Eternal Values was sweepingly dubbed "meaningless". Metaphysics of whatever sort was mercilessly thrust aside as speculation without any significance. The quest of what had been called "philosophical truths" was branded as a linguistic confusion by which nonsense had been rampant. The thinking world received a serious shock under this total uncompromising attack, especially as the method of attack was an unfamiliar one and certain linguistic disentanglements were brilliantly carried out. At that time Logical Positivism was certainly positive and looked rather logical.

It occupied, however, a curious no-man's land in ultimate attitude. To the non-materialists it appeared to be materialistic in temper since it swore only by sense-experience. To the materialists it seemed perverse in saying that not only their opponents but they themselves were talking nonsense. Did they not also swear by sense-experience? The logical positivist replied that the materialists swore in addition by a so-called "real" material world which they thought they sense-experienced. To assert such a world was, in his eyes, to make a metaphysical statement and transcend what sense-experience implied and if one metaphysical statement was permitted the non-materialists would have to be allowed their right to metaphysicise.

Here the materialists, the objective idealists and the spiritual realists joined hands to retort: "If you stop short with sense-experience, you end up with the position of Hume who came to the conclusion that, since ultimately sense-experience can mean for each one nobody's else's sense-experience except his own, one cannot logically argue that anything exists outside it—either objects or persons. In other words, sheer subjectivism or solipsism has to be accepted."

The logical positivist snapped his fingers at this retort. He declared that to argue in this style showed how little the critics understood Logical Positivism. Solipsism is metaphysics: how can Logical Positivism which is against all metaphysics be saddled with that theory? A proposition, for it, has meaning either if it is analytic—that is, repetitive in itself, like "3×2=6", in which we only bring out what is already implied, say twice the same thing and make no discovery of a new fact—or else if it is synthetic and empirically verifiable—that is, expressive of a new fact and implicative of a mode of operation in terms of sense-experience to verify it, like "Arsenic is poisonous." Can we ascribe to solipsism or subjectivism meaning in either sense? If we cannot, then Logical Positivism rules it out as nonsensical as much as statements about soul, God and Eternal Values—or, on the other hand, a "real" material world.

Such arguing was pretty clever, but hardly satisfying. It had the

look of evasive sophistry and some of the deeper minds that were developing the new doctrine were uneasy. Wittgenstein, himself a pioneer, was one of those who almost at the very start made some sort of breach from within. As a logical positivist he did his best to elude metaphysical terms and fight shy of philosophical truths, but he finally declared that philosophical truths "show themselves", though they cannot be "said". To say them is to utter nonsense, since they have meaning in neither of the ways in which propositions can, according to Logical Positivism, have meaning. And yet to avoid them is to shirk what stares every thinking mind in the face. At the end of his famous *Tractatus* he wrote: "What solipsism (and subjectivism) means is correct, only it cannot be said."

Most of the other logical positivists were not much disturbed and their dogmatism made merry for quite a while. But a constant barrage of criticism was directed at them, especially by those who felt that, whatever solipsistic or subjectivist colour may "show itself", Logical Positivism—particularly in Carnap's later version of it as "Physicalism"—was for all practical purposes a thoroughly materialistic movement closing the door upon all search for a philosophy of genuine ethics, aesthetics, religion, mysticism. The most effective attack was on the very centre of Logical Positivism: the principle of verifiability. According to this principle, "a sentence is factually significant to any person if, and only if, he knows how to verify the proposition which it purports to express" and the mode of verification is the occurrence of actual or possible sensations. The attack lay in asking: Is the principle of verifiability, which evidently is taken as significant, a proposition that can itself be verified in the mode laid down? If it is an analytic statement it is merely tautologous and can have no bearing on matter of fact. But is there any kind of sense-experience which would verify it?

The battle that has waged on this point has come to a close. It has been found impossible to specify any form of observation, any occurrence of actual or possible sensations by which the verification of Logical Positivism's fundamental principle can be carried out. In the recent revised edition of Ayer's *Language, Truth and Logic* the most influential logical positivist of the last fifteen years says that this principle cannot "be either confirmed or refuted by any fact of experience." Ayer calls it a definition. It is a definition, according to him, of one proper use of the word "meaning." The general consequence of such an admission is that metaphysical statements which can have no meaning in the sense allowed by the principle of verifiability can have meaning in some other sense. Also, since no sense-experience or observation can verify this principle, it is itself a metaphysical statement!

In bringing in metaphysics by the back door after pretending to throw it out by the front, Logical Positivism ceases to be logical. In having to concede that the verifiability principle is no more than a definition of one proper use of the word "meaning", it ceases to be positive. For the recommendation of the principle by Ayer and his supporters becomes just a proposal that we should confine our attention to propositions of a certain type—namely, those verifiable by sense-experience. The recommendation in itself is quite arbitrary and we are under no obligation to follow it. Our metaphysical pursuits need not at all be nonsensical, at least not more than is Logical Positivism.

## When Poems Are Born...

When poems are born,  
No man and woman meet:  
A lion and a nebula  
Vanish in a single heat!

A light that is nameless and formless  
Plucks up the master of life—  
Limbs of carved thunder take  
An infinite silence for wife.

And by the unfathomed fusing  
Of the below with the beyond,  
A mystery leaps out of slumber,  
Breaking time's bond.

A cry like immortal honey  
Foretastes of the Truth behind  
Our human grope—the almighty  
Body of Supermind!

K. D. SETHNA.