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K. R. PODDAR

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K. D. SETHNA

"GREAT IS TRUTH AND IT SHALL PREVAIL"

ALTERNATE SATURDAYS

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SRI AUROBINDO UNIVERSITY CENTRE

By "Synergist"

Plato considered ignorance the one real vice, and many of the greatest thinkers of the world have agreed with him. The knowledge of man's own being, of the Universe and of the Ultimate Reality, has always been the goal of seekers of knowledge, and the emancipation of man's mind from the domination of his lower animal nature so that it can live in the light of the highest Truth, Good and Beauty, has been looked upon as the peak of mental development. Therefore, it is always gratifying to know of any scheme of education which seeks to develop man's intellectual and spiritual nature. When it is proposed to carry out such a scheme on an international basis in a country like India with its ignorant millions, it is undoubtedly an event of importance, especially as the inspiration behind it is a great spiritual figure like Sri Aurobindo.

In an Appeal for donations issued from his Pondicherry Ashram we are told that "one of the most recent forms under which Sri Aurobindo conceived of the development of his work was to establish at Pondicherry an International University centre open to students from all over the world." It is felt that the most fitting memorial to his name would be to found this University now "so as to give concrete expression of the fact that his work continues with unabated vigour." Therefore an All-India Convention is going to be held at Pondicherry on 24th and 25th of April, under the Presidentship of Mr. Shyama Prasad Mukherjee, when the plans for collecting money for the Sri Aurobindo Memorial Fund will be discussed. A number of prominent men from all over the country, who are interested in the problem of education in India, are going to attend it. Among others, Dr. Kalidas Nag, Lord Sinha, Mr. Anantha Sayanam Ayyangar (Deputy Speaker, Parliament) and several other M.P.'s as well as Sir Chunilal Mehta and Justice N. H. Bhagwati (Vice-Chancellor, Bombay University) are going specially to Pondicherry to attend the Convention.

It is learnt that the education given at the University will be primarily based on Sri Aurobindo's own teachings and writings, and that it will be entirely free. This is in accordance with Sri Aurobindo's own wishes. Another unique feature of this University Scheme will be that the students coming from various parts of the world—applications have already been received from America, France, England, Germany, Egypt and other places—will be taught in their own languages.

Ever since Romain Rolland called Sri Aurobindo "the completest synthesis that has been realised to this day of the genius of Asia and the genius of Europe," the eyes of many of the intellectuals of the world have been turned towards him and his Ashram. Educated at St. Paul's and Cambridge in the heyday of Rationalism and Humanism, he grew to recognise the value of the great social and political ideals advocated by the West and the importance of science and technics and the right ordering of man's physical existence; but he saw too their basic insufficiency—their incapacity to solve the fundamental problems of existence and create for men a better life. He assimilated in his consciousness all that was finest in the culture of the West, and then turned towards the spiritual treasures of his own country. After attaining the traditional realisations described in the Vedas, the Upanishads and the Gita, he ascended the ladder of Being to the gnostic heights of the Spirit at the summit of which is the Supermind, the Truth-consciousness of the Divine Being—that Supreme Consciousness by attaining which one knows God in all His integrality and totality; not only the truth of His essential Being but also the meaning and purpose behind His cosmic manifestation.

After his great illumination he realised that the fundamental truth of existence is the truth of the Spirit, the other is the truth of life; that the antinomy created between the two by those who had not the gnostic enlightenment was an unreal one, for life is the expression and manifestation of the Spirit, not its irreconcilable opposite. Spirit is not only the source of life, but its very basis. But outwardly life with its apparently blundering growth and its gropings and stumblings does not seem to be an expression of the Spiritual Reality, because man in whom it has become dimly conscious is still an unenlightened creature with a partial awareness that

cannot penetrate into its secret workings. Therefore man has to grow in awareness and knowledge and possess greater spiritual power so that he can master life and transform it and make it a true expression of the Spirit; He has to grow in the fullness of the divine and recreate his earthly existence in its image—that is the meaning of his evolution.

With the goal of the divinisation of man and the transformation of his earth-life before him, Sri Aurobindo set out to write his treatises on spiritual metaphysics, ethics, psychology, and social and political philosophy. Being a combination of a metaphysician and a poet, a socio-political philosopher and a Master of Yoga, Sri Aurobindo with his vast spiritual attainments was ideally equipped to create a synthesis of knowledge. The truths of Spirit and of life that he had apprehended in his spiritual vision he tried to work out first from the metaphysical point of view, for he says that in philosophy metaphysical truth is the nucleus of the rest, it is the statement of the last and most general truths on which all the others depend or in which they are gathered up. He, therefore, created a spiritual metaphysic—a metaphysic based on his spiritual realisations, and therefore grounded in Reality, to serve as the foundation of his world-view; this was his *Life Divine*.

The demand for a spiritual ethic—a law of right action, a way that would show man how to grow into the Spirit through the doing of works—was met by the *Essays on the Gita*. The next step was to find the means by which the metaphysical and spiritual truths could be dynamised and actualised in life. To achieve this, says Sri Aurobindo, it was necessary "to develop the most profound and vital methods of psychological self-discipline and self-development so that the mental and psychical life of man may express the spiritual life through the utmost possible expansion of its own richness, power and complexity." Therefore, in his *Synthesis of Yoga* he says he tried "to arrive at a synthetical view of the principles and methods of the various lines of spiritual self-discipline and the way in which they can lead to an integral divine life in the human existence". "But this", he immediately adds, "is an individual self-development, and therefore it was necessary to show too how our ideal can work out in the social life of mankind. In *The Psychology of Social Development*,* we have indicated how these truths affect the evolution of human society. In *The Ideal of Human Unity*, we have taken the present trend of mankind outwards a closer unification and tried to appreciate its tendencies and show what is wanting in them in order that real human unity may be achieved."

This is where Sri Aurobindo's philosophy radically differs from the traditional spiritual philosophies. Though more than any other seer or thinker he recognises the importance of the individual and stresses the fact that it is he who has to act as the spearhead of the evolutionary movement, the community and the nation benefiting by his development, it is a collective advance towards the Light and a general transformation of the earth-consciousness that Sri Aurobindo has always kept before him as his ideal.

It is therefore fitting that such an exalted teaching should be made the basis of education in an University with an international status. This University should find support from people all over the world, for Sri Aurobindo's thought owing to its catholicity and all-embracing totality seems to have an universal appeal; people of all sects, creeds and faiths look up to him and his teachings for spiritual guidance as well as for help in their daily life. Not only his own countrymen, but Englishmen, Americans, Jews, Chinese, Germans all recognise his intellectual and spiritual stature. Regarding his own reaction to Sri Aurobindo's teachings, Professor Piper of Syracuse University writes: "The greatest gift of Sri Aurobindo to me as a philosopher is his magnificent perspective of existence, in three directions; the dignity and destiny of man; the meaning of long-time evolution, the laboratory of the Divine; and the universal dynamic of Cosmic Intelligence. His sustained song of the nature and divine potentialities of the human mind comes as a refreshing breeze over the fragmentary, super-

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* This work was recently published for the first time simultaneously in India and America under the title "The Human Cycle."

INTEGRAL AND INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION

By DR. INDRA SEN

The world is witnessing today a cultural impasse more than a political deadlock or an economic crisis. The latter are largely the consequence of the cultural life, the outlook and the values that we possess and care for today. The Renaissance in Europe in the 16th century had really set the standard for us. The scientific intellectual approach to nature and life that it advocated and popularised has directly and progressively led to the conditions that constitute our present life and environment. And we are surely in a most extraordinary situation. The conflicts, divisions and oppositions are more than man was perhaps ever before faced with. But that does not matter. What really matters and is most intriguing in the whole situation is that our best solutions of the problems seem to turn out to be mere patch-work, since the conflicts, divisions and oppositions reappear in other forms.

We wonder at the behaviour of our affairs, ask ourselves again and again whether there is a way out of the impasse and not infrequently tend to get into a despondent mood.

But is there really no solution of our problems? None, it appears, if we consider problems severally and persist in our present approach to them. Recent history has, in fact, demonstrated that with repeated insistence.

The crisis in our affairs is a challenge and a reminder to us to examine the premises of our cultural life and reshape them. With an approach, especially intellectual, whose primary function is analysis and division, we cannot hope to achieve real wholeness. Our best unities today are constructions of ideas and ideals. They are not hearty, real onenesses, which good-will, love and a larger perception alone can give.

Evidently, another larger and deeper approach than the present analytical-intellectual approach seems to be urgently called for by our cultural situation. Such a larger, deeper and fuller view and way of life was, indeed, Sri Aurobindo's seeking. The call of the Spirit, which took him away from active politics in 1910 was, in fact, a call to discover the truer basis of life and the means of its realization, not as an individual salvation for himself but as a general solution for mankind.

In 1922 in response to a request to help in the political field, he wrote to C.R. Das that he had seen that the true causation of things lay in the spiritual realm and that he was determined to explore and realise the fullest possibilities of spiritual life. Out of such determination on Sri Aurobindo's part has emerged an ideal of the spiritual regeneration and transformation of mankind, an Ashram as the original and restricted field for the working out of this ideal and a vast literature expounding the nature of this ideal, its necessity for man and the methods of training for the realisation of it. The literature, in fact, gives a comprehensive account of the new orientation, a new living and a new cultural life, which seems to promise the best and lasting solution of our ills.

It was the universities of Europe which had taken up the standpoint of the Renaissance and imparted it to their alumni and in course of time it became the popular cultural outlook of the European peoples and today it is very nearly the outlook of the whole world. Now, if we have tasted of the full consequences of this outlook and feel the necessity of a new one, one integral and whole, then we have first to attempt it in our universities and train the youth in new ways of cognition and will, ways which will be essentially synthetic and integral and which will give to the analytical functions of the mind their own proper secondary place.

But evidently at the first instance this must be attempted at one place and that is exactly the inspiration and the justification of a Sri Aurobindo University, a University which should grow up in collaboration with the Ashram, where Sri Aurobindo had worked to develop and cultivate this new cultural life for the last 40 years and where his work is now carried

on by the Mother. As a memorial too, this would naturally be the best thing to carry forward for the future generations the name of Sri Aurobindo.

When we visualise such a memorial we naturally ask what would be the distinctive features of this University. Its essential purpose, we have stated above. We can also state a few other features which will, in fact, be consequences of it. It is obvious that the separation of the theoretical and practical motives of life will not be consistent with the purpose of evolving synthetic powers of mind. Life will have to be taken as an integer and continually sought to be developed integrally. The atmosphere of the University will evidently have to be more like that of an Ashram, where knowledge is always related to life and you seek to know because you want to improve the quality of human living. Knowledge too will always have to be regarded as the Unity that it really is. Each branch will, no doubt, pursue its own further development, but it will do that with a clear consciousness of its proper place in integral knowledge and of its relationship with other branches.

However, the greatest distinction of the university will be its attitude towards the instruments of knowledge. Today we regard the senses and the intellect as our only instruments. This university will surely seek a cultivation of these, but it will do so in the knowledge that there are higher and yet higher instruments of cognition. Its immediate objective will be the growth of what we have called a synthetic perception, a whole way of seeing things. But then it will progressively seek the yet higher instruments which Sri Aurobindo has described as the Higher Mind, the Illumined Mind, the Intuitive Mind, the Overmind and so still beyond up to the Supermind. Today we seek a horizontal growth of knowledge at the intellectual level; there is no attempt to grow in the levels themselves. But it is, in fact, the growth in the levels that brings into being knowledge of new qualities, fundamentally superior and more comprehensive orientations.

These features give no more than a broad outline of the approach which the proposed university will have to follow. But it is evident that a working out of it will result in a reorganization of our entire knowledge, our arts, sciences, philosophy and religion, in fact the entire cultural life.

The Sri Aurobindo University will more appropriately have to be an international university, since the new basis of life and culture that it would see is of a general validity. In fact the larger synthetic experience which it would seek is the proper base on which the true Unity of the human race can be built up. The Ashram has already discovered and laid the foundations of the true common culture of man on the basis of spiritual experience, and the University will have to broaden and enlarge it by affording opportunities to the representative students of different nations to make their distinctive contribution to the evolution of a rich common culture.

When we think of an institution we very often want a full-fledged formal structure and organisation of it almost immediately. But such structure and organisation is after all a clothing, an outer expression and a means of the realisation of the essential inspiration and idea of the thing. And such form must evidently be allowed to grow as the inspiration and the idea grow. Obviously the more important thing is the appreciation of the need for the proposed University, an understanding of the present-day cultural impasse and of the power of Sri Aurobindo's vision and work to meet it. And if we do that and do that sincerely enough, our energies will spontaneously begin to function for the realisation of the ideal and we shall be surprised how soon the ideal becomes a fact. Already since the first appeal for the Sri Aurobindo Memorial Fund for the University was issued a couple of months ago, considerable progress has been made and with a large realization of the need for such a university, the project is bound to make quicker progress.

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ficial, earth-bound glimpses of the self in western psychology and epistemology... *The Life Divine* is in large part a declaration and design of the freedom of mankind." Professor Bergmann of Hebrew University, Jerusalem, also seems to have had a glimpse from "a peak in Darien" on reading the works of Sri Aurobindo. He sees in the Indian rishi the fulfilment of the hopes and aspirations of the Jewish people. He writes: "Sri Aurobindo's message about the arising of a new humanity touches the heart of Jewry brought up in an atmosphere of Messianic hopes.....In the course of the last generation our Messianic hope and message has become colourless and trite;.....Sri Aurobindo has revived the Messianic idea and hope in its full cosmic meaning and implications: he identified the kingdom of heaven with the Indian *Satyuga* and saw it not as a far-off dream or vision but as a very topical idea and action-programme." And Dr. Tan Yun-Shan, the Founder-Director of the Sino-Indian Cultural Society, remarks: "Sri Aurobindo has evolved a practical philosophy of life which is singular in the history of man's spiritual achievement.....It is my hope and prayer that he may keep on extending his inspiring influence till mankind awakens to the truth of his mission."

It is when men of different countries meet like this at the intellectual and spiritual level, that one sees the possibility of a world-unity on a basis

of spiritual oneness becoming one day an actuality, and of Sri Aurobindo's dream becoming a reality.

Regarding the ideal for which he worked incessantly for the last forty years and for the successful culmination of which, it is believed, he found it necessary to sacrifice his body, Sri Aurobindo writes: "What then shall be our ideal? Unity for the human race by an inner oneness and not only by an external association of interests; the resurgence of man out of the merely animal and economic life or the merely intellectual and aesthetic into the glories of the spiritual existence; the pouring of the power of the spirit into the physical mould and mental instrument so that man may develop his manhood into that true supermanhood which shall exceed our present state as much as this exceeds the animal state from which science tells us that we have issued. These three are one; for man's unity and man's self-transcendence can come only by living in the Spirit." In the creation of this unity the University is sure to play a major part—the mind of man has to learn to open itself to the influx of the Divine Light and Force, the bringing down of which in the earth-consciousness as an operative power has been the work of Sri Aurobindo all these years. The "rational mind" has to be transformed

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THE BASES OF CULTURAL FREEDOM ★

Report of the discussion in one of the four Sectional Conferences of the Indian Congress for Cultural Freedom held recently in Bombay.

At the very start it was pointed out that the aim of this particular Conference would be to help the other Conferences to understand what exactly it is that is worth preserving and defending and that the discussion of the bases of cultural freedom would be fundamental to the work of the whole Congress.

The subject was seen to include in general the cultural consciousness of India, but it was wider than a discussion of what India's contribution to culture is and what particular questions immediately concern India—questions such as the relation between the Indian religious tradition and the modern western trends or the place of the English language in India's cultural life.

It was felt that the wider connotation of the subject did not contradict the bases of cultural freedom according to the Indian conception; for there was nothing in that conception which could not link up with true fundamentals everywhere in the world.

One of the initial suggestions was that culture should be understood in terms of the highest possibility open to man and that it should mean integration of the whole being of man in terms of that possibility. To determine what is the highest possibility is the main thing, and it was asked whether man's intellect was his highest possibility or there was something deeper and higher which would certainly use the intellect to the full but be essentially a different power than the intellectual.

Taking a cue from this query a delegate defined culture as the pursuit of intrinsic values and said that the degree to which we seek such values and attain enjoyment of them shows the degree of our culture. He distinguished different psychological levels. Mainly there are two levels active—that of perception and that of intellect. The former is the animal level and is concerned with the sense-organs and helps us to become conscious of our environment and adjust ourselves to it. Man has reached the stage of self-consciousness, the intellectual stage, and this gives him a tremendous increase of power: he can, with the power of memory, take the past into himself and with the power of the imagination project himself into the future. And yet this is not all that man is. It is his common level. Beyond it is the level of what may be called an integrated vision of things, a whole-vision—the level to which the experiences of the artist, the poet and the mystic point. This level is more in the nature of a potentiality—it is only very rarely possessed; but its qualitative value is immense. And the essence of culture should be the realisation of this plane and its generalisation in common life.

At this point a delegate said that culture was not so much intrinsic value as expressive activity which had a certain quality. Ancient Sparta was cited as having had certain intrinsic values, but when it came to real culture there was a serious lack. Culture, it was urged, is the sum-total of all the creative activities of the community; not only all the arts but also things like cooking and the making and enjoying of curries and sauces and wines can be cultural if they are creative expressions of intrinsic values of a community. If they mean something to us and illuminate the life of the community, they are cultural. For instance, the drinking of wine contributes to the mood of Plato's *Symposium* and cannot be separated from what the *Symposium* as a cultural expression stands for. If we wish to know whether something is cultural we must ask: Is it creative? People living a thousand years hence may well study how eating rice or drinking wine expressed our intrinsic values.

Here a new turn was given to the discussion by a declaration that the only concrete thing we come across is individual man—man in his flesh and blood and man in his spirit. The community is a concept, the world is a concept, only the individual is the actuality we deal with. And the first need of man the individual is knowledge of self, which amounts also to knowledge of non-self. Again, no one has seen man in isolation—man cannot be conceived without a society. He is both an individual and a part of society. Therefore we cannot conceive of any culture without taking into consideration man's bi-polar content. Culture is both an individual and a social concept. Also, the sum-total of man's creative activities does not exhaust the nature of culture. Culture is more than that. If we go beneath the aspects of manifestation and seek the cause of creative activities we find above and below the sum-total something that integrates those activities: an integral calculus is here and not mere arithmetic. There is a unity which makes one family of, for instance, different artists in different ages of a country. Dante, Leonardo and others were one

family in their essence. What is that unity? Something that we distinguish as national character: an attitude by which the hunger of the spirit is sought to be satisfied. A community has a culture if it has a unity and allows an integration in a particular attitude. However, while national culture is an indispensable step to world-culture, nevertheless if a man does not go beyond his nation and have a sense of solidarity with mankind he lacks something: there is a world-context without which man is no longer man.

Then the question was asked whether a man needs to be creative in the sense of expression in order to be cultured. Is not Culture a matter of being or status rather than expression through books and other so-called creative media? It was remarked by a delegate that a man somehow communicating intrinsic values is *ipso facto* creative: whether he uses commonly accepted creative media or no, he is creative in the sense that he has enhanced the community's power of enjoying intrinsic values.

A delegate said that there was no profound conflict between the two views, though evidently there was a difference. He went on to recall what ideas had influenced him in his life. In early life it was the statement: "The chief aim of man is to glorify God." This was obviously not all that could be said and its terms did not admit of satisfactory explanation. Later, he was under the influence of the idea that one's concern is to give expression to those desires and beliefs which in one's opinion are capable of bringing about a higher state of being. This too had its limitations, for it paid insufficient attention to the reason why one's concern should be a higher state. It has been stressed by a modern philosophic thinker that every man must acquire a theory of the universe. The question that is important, in this view, is: What is truth? And we have to consider what responsibilities truth confronts us with. There is an indefiniteness about truth, but the quest of it represents man's ability to conceive and man's ability to dream. It means that intrinsic values are there as important and it implies also the creative urges that come to us. The creative urges are a means of limited expression of something indefinable and infinite which too is real. The right view of culture is a synthesis of intrinsic values and creative urges.

Another delegate declared that two things were necessary to bear in mind. He agreed that human individual culture is strong when a particular individual attains conception and enjoyment of intrinsic values. Still, when we come to social culture, there is a certain limitation of the number of intrinsic values. Thus the English, French and Spanish peoples have definite national characters. The English are interested most in action, the intrinsic value predominantly implied is Goodness. The French are interested most in thought and the main value implied is Truth. The Spanish are a "pathic" people and are interested most in feeling and the intrinsic value implied is principally Beauty. The French and the Spanish are less interested than the English in Virtue, though this does not mean that they are less virtuous. Their interest lies more in the direction of either philosophical values or aesthetic values. Perfect culture would be appreciation of all intrinsic values. The second thing we must remember is that we have come to this Congress as on a particular pilgrimage: we have been moved by a threat to freedom, so we must consider culture *sub specie libertatis* and ask: what aspects of culture are threatened? It would be desirable to have a clear text on which we could work, and the text should regard culture as both an individual and a social phenomenon and lay emphasis on the indispensableness of freedom to both these sides.

The mention of different values and of Virtue as a value led a delegate to consider the point that at times what we might regard as bad ways of life could lead to beautiful cultural expressions. He referred to Polynesian culture and the culture of the head-hunters who for all their non-virtuous practices could produce works of art which expressed savagery and yet were beautiful. As regards freedom, this delegate added, we are inclined to connect freedom in an absolute way with culture. But though there may be something absolute here we must admit that in the past certain censorship and tyrannies have produced cultural manifestations of a high order. It seems that the centuries in Spanish history when art was strictly confined to religious views and when the Inquisition was functioning gave rise to Spain's most magnificent works of arts. In Italy of the Renaissance, great art was not under strict religious direction monuments. So one should consider what kind of freedom was essential

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into the "mind of light" and then gradually into the "gnostic mind" or the supramentalised mind. This work of transformation will be greatly helped by Sri Aurobindo's teachings and his personal influence which still works silently from behind life's outer veil and more directly through his associate, the Mother.

India is fortunate in having a great spiritual tradition; but owing to certain one-sided tendencies in her psychospiritual development, she has gained the Spirit at the expense of Life and Matter. She has evolved in Spirit, but her life-energy has been sapped and her physical mould weakened. Now at last she has found a seer-philosopher and Master of Yoga who does not follow in the footsteps of the traditional Mayavadists,

Nihilists or even the Advaitists of the older school, but is a spiritual descendant of the Vedic Rishis. The spiritual spade-work begun by Agasthya and Parasara, by Vamadev and Visvamitra is carried on and brought to its divine consummation by Sri Aurobindo. He also brings to a successful culmination the work done by Sri Krishna. Sri Krishna with his global Overmind vision and power gathered together the various strands of spiritual discipline and brought men's Godward effort to a focus and stabilised certain evolutionary gains; Sri Aurobindo with his integral and total Supermind vision and power fuses into a single divine flame the spiritual efforts of the whole human race and carries forward earth evolution to its logical conclusion.

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but flourished under political despots who wanted the artists to produce to culture. Today the tyranny we face is one which should be combated in the cause of culture. It directs everything to the material side of man and to material ends in life. When a Renaissance artist was ordered to construct tombs he could create genuine values even under tyranny. The tyrants aimed at self glorification but left the artist free to create the tomb in the light of his own artistic values. The Stalinist dictatorship says that it knows best what is good in the sphere of art. Art has here no independence, it cannot devote itself to its own sense of truth but has to be bent into the service of the political principles of a party. The artist is asked to be a mere propagandist. It is extremely amazing how poets and musicians are being censured. When Shostakovich composed music that struck the mind as sad while the Soviet people were supposed to be happy, he was condemned as a melancholic individualist. An artist cannot be true to his inspiration. Here the intrinsic freedom of the artist is denied.

A new direction was given to the debate by a member setting up the anthropological definition of culture: the whole of human activity. Every activity is culture—the question of valuation comes later. Against this definition it was urged that if every activity is culture, then when we ask whether something is good or bad we are discussing not culture but something else. Another delegate suggested that the right thing to say is not that every activity is culture but that every activity *can* be culture. No activity can be debarred from cultural possibilities, but in itself it cannot be culture: certain values must first come in.

Here a delegate said that what made for culture was the individual's attitude to his activity, the underlying reason why he does this or that. A man with a commercial mind would be perfectly cut off from culture. One cannot rate a piece of jazz music as equal to the composition of a great musician. Thus all activity cannot be cultural. This delegate was supported by another who said that values are intrinsic to culture and do not come afterwards: culture is bound up with a state of consciousness.

Apropos of state of consciousness and creative expression, it was asked whether a Yogi who may sit silent and have no observable creative expression can be called cultured. The answer given was that he is practising culture of the soul: in India, mental activity is not regarded as the highest power of man: something beyond it is really the ideal state and when a man absorbs himself in spiritual meditation and in the realisation of his inmost being he transcends the mind and brings the highest possible power of consciousness into play. A felicitous comparison was made at this point when it was said that the silence of the Yogi is as really culture as the three bars of silence in a symphony of Beethoven.

It was felt by everybody that there was a need for some working definition of culture which could form part of the general declaration the Congress would make. Otherwise the discussion, however brilliant, would be like a meteor that flashes and passes away. After some discussion on a definition put forward by a delegate, the following terms were laid down: "Culture is both individual and social. Individual culture is an attitude to life on the part of an individual who seeks awareness of himself and of the world. Social culture results from the integration, in a geographical environment and an historical tradition, of the contributions of the creative individuals and the successive generations of the community."

One delegate felt that merely to seek awareness did not do justice to the element of aspiration, the sense of ideality, the impulse towards the

perfect, that were present in cultural pursuit. A *nisus* towards deity, as the modern phrase goes, is undeniable, according to him. So he proposed that we should say: "seeks ever deeper awareness". On behalf of the original definition it was pleaded that the word "seeks" carried in it the shade of aspiration and that further qualification was not quite essential and might complicate matters. Another delegate said: "Culture is primarily social. One's own private dreams cannot be culture. Only when other men come into the picture there is a cultural phenomenon." As an answer to this it was declared that although culture does involve co-operation it is something that comes out of the individual.

An alternative formula was offered by a delegate in the following terms: "Culture is a manifestation of the continuous inner growth of a people which can only be enriched by the self-expression of a creative individual." To this it was answered that to speak of culture as a growth was somewhat circular, even though the adjective "inner" was meant to clarify the point. Another opinion passed on this definition was that the individual's role was not sufficiently stressed: he was said only to enrich culture, but was not the individual the very root of culture? Unless we emphasise the individual we shall not start at the right end in condemning totalitarian tyranny.

It was decided that, while the second definition was not in its philosophical intention very much at odds with the first, the first should be retained.

A delegate wished to touch upon the notion expressed earlier that certain despotisms had led to great culture. He said: "It is true that the highest peak of Spanish culture coincided with the age of the Inquisition. But this peak was prepared by the time before the Inquisition and if the Inquisition had not been there culture would have been still better. Similarly, in present-day Spain, before Franco came into power there was a great creative activity let loose by a period of freedom. This activity continued under Franco by its past momentum but cannot be attributed to his dictatorship. In fact it was not any longer in its full form and has been diminishing all the while. Owing to the bad forces set in motion during Franco's regime, what will come after Franco will be poor. People will perhaps then say that freedom came but with poor cultural fruits. It would, however, be a fallacy to believe that freedom engendered these fruits. Really they would be a legacy from the old dictatorial régime. We can safely assume that freedom alone breeds the highest culture."

The delegate who had spoken of Spain during the Inquisition and Italy under the Renaissance-despots agreed. He explained that he had not meant that tyranny was the direct cause of the good culture. He had wished merely to distinguish the old tyrannies that did not annul culture, from the modern tyranny which gives it no room at all. The latter leaves no free area to the artist's imagination. Michelangelo was free to direct his imagination to the area of his sense of God which no despot ever controlled. Today in totalitarian countries like Soviet Russia our whole force is sought to be made subservient to the State and all our powers to be used for expressing the political party-formulas of the State.

The delegates then turned their attention to making a final statement on culture. After considering whether there could really be different national cultures or only the same bases of culture with different national traits and tendencies giving them somewhat dissimilar appearances, the delegates took as their starting-point the definition already accepted and in co-operation arrived at a general statement in the form of a series of declarations.

LIGHTS FROM PONDICHERY —Continued from opposite page

Entretiens. If in the former we saw the heights and profundities of occultism and mystical wisdom, in the later we come to the practical discipline of Yoga, an infallible spiritual knowledge and an intellectual understanding of the mystic Path. Here the very first question takes us into the heart of the matter: "Would you say something to us about Yoga?" In fact the whole of *Entretiens* is a series of questions and answers. And they deal with the central problems of aspiration and destiny, e.g.: "How is one to meet adverse forces—that are invisible and yet quite living and tangible?" or "Is our vital being to take part in the Divine love? If it does, what is the right and correct form of the participation it should take?"; or again, "Have Yogis done greater dramas than Shakespeare?" Here discourses centre round particular problems that are raised, sometimes by our foolish mind: the answers are marvellous in their clarity, cogency and a certain revelatory quality which is not difficult for human mind to understand. We have hardly any scope here for a long quotation, but we can take this splendid piece as a specimen—both with regard to the light and beauty it emanates:

"Love is a supreme force which the Eternal Consciousness sent down from itself into an obscure and darkened world that it might bring back that world and its beings to the Divine. The material world in its darkness and ignorance had forgotten the Divine. Love came into the darkness; it awakened all that lay there asleep; it whispered, opening the ears that were sealed. "There is something that is worth waking to, worth living for, and it is love!" and with the awakening to love there entered into the world the possibility of coming back to the Divine. The creation moves upward through love towards the Divine and in answer there leans down-

ward to meet the creation the Divine Love and Grace. Love cannot exist in its pure beauty, love cannot put on its native power and intense joy of fullness until there is this interchange, this fusion between the earth and the Supreme, this movement of Love from the Divine to the creation and from the creation to the Divine..."

Lastly, about the translations. We have already spoken about the Mother's French, we need not repeat the same arguments over again. *La Mère, La Synthèse du Yoga, La Vie Divine* (first few chapters) are a landmark in the history of French literature. Of course the world would have felt luckier to get a complete translation of *The Life Divine* from the Mother's hands, and also of *The Ideal of Human Unity*. The world today is torn to pieces, due to a war of petty conflicting ideas and interests. A good part of the world still adores French and there these books will serve as a beacon light of hope and assurance. But for the moment it will be wiser perhaps to remain content with what we have got. One more thing we hope it is not impertinent to mention. Amidst the fairly large body of French we have spoken about let it not be forgotten that the Mother is equally at ease with English. The whole of the *Entretiens* was first in English; the French version came subsequently.

One does not know what will happen, but I for one would like to see in future India French given an equally honoured place side by side with English so that masters of that sweet language may be appreciated in their original. In the meanwhile, the Mother's message is accessible through English and in some cases through advanced Indian languages. Thus, the temple is ready, the path made clear for pilgrims to reach the altar, and fill their bosom with a priceless treasure.

(Amrita Bazar Patrika)

LIGHTS FROM PONDICHERRY

By SAMIR KANTA GUPTA

To write a book in French and that again to publish in India is not a very happy proposition for any writer. Here, in the first place, the number of its readers are few, and fewer still the number of true appraisers. Secondly, in a glaring contrast with things of the West, publication-publicity in our country is indeed extremely feeble, still in its infancy or crawling stage. Only recently there has been in evidence some push and go in this field, but all still remains to be organised and set firmly upon a broader and intenser basis. However, that is another matter. Against this discouraging background there appeared in succession *Entretiens Avec Mère, Prières et Méditations* (both in the thirties of the present century), *Paroles d'Autrefois* and *Belles Histoires*. The Mother, the writer of these beautiful books, has in addition a good number of translations to her credit: *La Mère, La Synthèse du Yoga, La Vie Divine* and *Essais sur le Gita* (all of them from the original in English by Sri Aurobindo). Of the translations we will speak later on. Not that they are unimportant or less important, but because we want to follow the chronological order of the works which incidentally may also help us to a better understanding of both the original works and the translations.

It is interesting to note that *Paroles d'Autrefois*, though printed as late as March, 1946, contains the earliest writings (1893) of the Mother. A young traveller going astray just for a little negligence and realising his mistake only too late when his misfortunes grow to immense proportions—this is the theme of the beautiful parable that opens the book (written as a school essay when the Mother was a girl of fifteen!) Every word is in its right place, and they invariably are the right words, and the ensemble gives vividly the concrete picture of a terrible conflict in the conscience of the young traveller. Written in prose, as I have already indicated, it overflows all the limiting rigidities that this mode of expression is subject to and often it rises to enchanting lyric heights. One hears the cry of the agonised soul, sees the prospect where a wrong path once chosen may lead to and is finally relieved to know the secret to get over any such catastrophe. And how many secrets are there in the book about dream and thought and life and Supreme Knowledge, laid open before the eyes of the reader to know and profit! *Les Vertus, Savoir Souffrir* and *La Découverte Suprême* are all gems of the purest kind shining in their inherent worth.

Only one month after the publication of the book we have just now mentioned, there appeared *Belles Histoires*. As is evident from the name itself, it is a book of short stories. Intended chiefly for the children *Belles Histoires* (based upon an English book) contains stories from various countries of the East and the West, stories that are arranged under eleven different chapters each one of which has its appropriate title viz. 'Self-mastery', 'Courage', 'Cheerfulness', 'Self-help', 'Patience and Perseverance', 'Plain Living', 'Prudence', 'Sincerity', 'To Judge Correctly', 'Order' and 'To Construct and to Destroy'. From a cursory glance at the table of contents it is quite possible for the superficial critic to boo at it as a book of morals. But a little journey into the book reveals that it is really a work of art, and the Mother is ever at her best when narrating a story, a dialogue or the various shades of a psychological state. Indeed if Art has any constructive value in life instead of being merely pleasant, if it is not merely a toy to sport with in leisure hours but serves deeper purposes and needs of the being it has to say something *useful*. The question then is both what is said and how it is said. Judged on these two counts *Belles Histoires* is a masterpiece. Here stories are not stories, that is to say fantastic fabrications, but actual facts that have occurred. These living examples point to higher things in man, and they all insist upon the nobler qualities that build up human character. Written with an infinite love for children it is at once a call to them to take up the challenge of the triple demon-god of Ignorance, Inertia and Ugliness, and re-lay the pattern of human life. Especially in India, where so colossal a misery prevails and so much work remains for the future generation to accomplish, this inspiring book will be, to quote the Mother herself, "a new weapon" in their hands.

We now come to the two more serious books of the Mother: *Prières et Méditations* and *Entretiens*. I shall first take up the Prayers and Meditations. It was, I suppose, in connection with this book that Maurice Magre who knew as much French as a Frenchman ought to know remarked that it was the highest perfection in style of which French was capable. A great compliment, no doubt. But what does it precisely mean? The French language in general and French prose in particular are marked out for their clarity and precision, their rational and scientific nature. Racine and Renan, France and Voltaire, Pascal and Michelet are a few among the immortal names that have contributed to this unique consummation. French, in the final analysis, means precision and precision means French. But such an instrument carries its own limitations as well. For, there are subtle shades in meaning some extremely suggestive and subtle vibrations behind the words which you cannot catch with the help of this mechanism of intellectual language. Whereas English, with its essential Celtic nature is less rational but more full of suggestiveness, more pliant, more capable of growing. French artists knew of this fact and were consciously trying various means to make up for this defect. In the realm of poetry Mallarmé made a gallant effort and not without considerable success. Yet, the insistence was all the while on the instrument, on the manner of composition: sometimes perhaps to loosen the rules of syntax and punctuation, sometimes in the Chinese manner of painting to give some significant strokes or hints in ideas and

leave the rest to the reader to fill up in their own canvas of mind. Such a process, as we have already said, can lead only to a partial success. Here the degree of success will vary according as the mental equipment is sharpened and trained and made receptive. But in order to break new grounds, to achieve new perfections, whether it be in the domain of poetry or prose, one has to breathe a new atmosphere or touch a different consciousness than the prevalent one. And the higher this level of consciousness that is contacted, the greater is the value it assumes in its outward expression. Here, for example is this magnificent piece from the Prayers and Meditations which shines like the sun and needs no other light to be explained:

"A ces heures bénies la terre tout entière chante un hymne d'allégresse, l'herbe frissonne de plaisir, l'air vibre de lumière, les arbres dressent vers le ciel leur prière plus ardente, le chant des oiseaux devient un cantique, les vagues de la mer se font d'amour, le sourire des enfants raconte l'infini, les âmes des hommes appaissent dans leurs yeux.

Dis-moi: m'accorderas-Tu pouvoir merveilleux de faire naître cette aurore dans les cœurs attentifs, d'éveiller les consciences à Ta sublime Présence dans ce monde si triste et si demantelé de susciter un peu de Ton vrai Paradis? Quels bonheurs, quelles richesses, quelles puissances terrestres peuvent égaler ce don souverain?.....

O Seigneur, jamais en vain je ne T'ai imploré, car, c'est Toi même en moi qui Te parles à Toi même."*

As one reads through these prayers one unmistakably feels that here French has, besides being thoroughly poetical, assumed another quality and another dharma, the very character of *mantra*. That is to say, the words become here the Word and carry in them the Power of realisation. The Vedic mantras were, of course, the earliest and the most perfect articulation in human speech; so much so, that they were rightly thought to belong to no individual person but breathed out of the universal. In the full blaze of the twentieth century we saw another miracle done by Sri Aurobindo who introduced a new spirit into English language, lifted it up and changed it into a marvellous vehicle to express even the Inexpressible, the profoundest thought that man in the modern world was groping in the darkness to seize and embody. The Mother has come in the same line after the Vedic Rishis and Sri Aurobindo. This, I think, was the implied meaning justifying Monsieur Magre's tribute to the author of the *Prières et Méditations*.

Prières et Méditations originally filled the pages of the Mother's personal diary. They were written out of an irresistible urge or an irresistible need of the being within to put down in black and white the torrents of realisation that were rushing in upon her, and to give them permanence also, as the occultists would say. They were not addressed to any human audience nor is there any sense of literary vanity in it. They are truly her prayers and meditations. In this respect they are singularly different from all other diaries of the world. The comparison is so futile that it would be better that we took to no such study. A magnificent book, but it would have remained perhaps in some unseen corner of the world had not Sri Aurobindo immediately seen its value and urged its publication. Printed as it is, it begins in France on November 2, 1912 and ends in India on October 23, 1937. A long journey indeed but the reader feels not the slightest drudgery in traversing it; on the contrary, one feels taken up by a pair of strong arms and placed in a world where it is all light and peace and purity and knowledge. I quote below another incomparable example.

"Sois cet amour en toute chose et partout, toujours plus largement, toujours plus intensément et le monde deviendra à la fois ton œuvre et ton bien, ton champ d'action et ta conquête. Lutte avec persistance pour faire tomber les dernières limites qui ne sont plus que de frêles barrières devant l'expansion de l'être, pour vaincre les dernières obscurités qu'éclaire déjà la Puissance Illuminatrice. Lutte pour conquérir et pour triompher; lutte pour surmonter tout ce qui fut jusqu'à ce jour; pour faire jaillir la Lumière nouvelle, l'Exemple nouveau dont le monde a besoin. Lutte avec opiniâtreté contre tous les obstacles extérieurs ou intérieurs. C'est le perle de grand prix qui est proposée à Ta Réalisation."†

Apparently these two quotations present a very small portion of the entire volume but they are sufficient, if read not with the flickering light of the mind but with the heart wide open, to allow us a clear glimpse of the fascinating vast panorama of creation which is very near to us and yet at the same time veiled from our human eyes and wisdom.

From Prayers and Meditations we enter into a new world in the
Continued on opposite page

* At these blessed hours all earth sings a hymn of gladness, the grasses shudder with pleasure, the air is vibrant with light, the trees lift towards heaven their most ardent prayer, the chant of the birds becomes a canticle, the waves of the sea billow with love, the smile of children tells of the infinite and the souls of men appear in their eyes.

† Tell me, wilt Thou grant me the marvellous power to give birth to this dawn in expectant hearts, to awaken the consciousness of men to Thy sublime Presence, and in this bare and sorrowful world awaken a little of Thy true Paradise? What happiness, what riches, what terrestrial power can equal this wonderful gift?

O Lord, never have I implored Thee in vain, for that which speaks to Thee is Thyself in me. (March 31, 1917).

† "Be this love in everything and everywhere, ever more widely, ever more intensely, and the whole world will become at once thy work and thy estate, thy field of action and thy conquest. Strive with persistence to throw down the last limits which are but frail barriers before the expansion of the being, to conquer the last obscurities which the illumining Power is already lighting up. Fight that thou mayst conquer and triumph; struggle to surmount all that has been up to this day, to make the new Light emerge, this 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." (December 25, 1916).

CHAPTER VII

"BLEEDING PIECE OF EARTH"*

One of the things that make Ashram life so hard to bear is that it first invites one to change, then exhorts, then coaxes and lastly presses one to realise that unless and until one agrees to change progressively, the divine life must remain a Utopian dream. Somebody said that human folly makes even the angels weep. In my childhood days when I used to read our epic *Mahabharata* I read somewhere that it was easier to do something than to undo it. That is why, it is contended, Abhimanyu, the boy hero, could break into the phalanx of his enemies but not retrace his steps. Sri Aurobindo has emphasised again and again the egregious nature of human folly which is responsible for this. Not folly alone but some kind of "contrariness" in the scheme of things—an insurmountable snag—which made even Vivekananda cry out: "The scheme of the world is devilish, I could have made a better world". Somehow things insist on going wrong progressively no matter what we will or do. That is why the word fatality has come to exercise an almost hypnotic influence on the minds of even the most robust among men. Sri Aurobindo has underlined the tragedy of this *seeming* fatality (I stress the word seeming because he does not accept fatality or its foster-child astrology except in a very modified sense) in his epic *Savitri* in the mouth of the pessimist fatalist Queen-mother. She expounds it, indeed, as her own individual point of view but who will dare deny, when one looks at man and the world as they are, that it is almost completely convincing so far as it goes:

*As if the world's stone load was not enough
A crop of miseries obstinately is sown
By his own hands in the furrows of the gods,
The vast increasing tragic harvest reaped
From old misdeeds buried by oblivious Time.
He walks by his own choice into hell's trap;
This mortal creature is his own worst foe.
His science is an artificer of doom:
He ransacks earth for means to harm his kind;
He slays his happiness and others' good.
Nothing has he learnt from time and its history;
Even as of old in the raw youth of Time,
When earth ignorant ran on the highways of Fate,
Old forms of evil cling to the world's soul:
War making nought the sweet smiling calm of life,
Battle and rapine, ruin and massacre
Are still the fierce pastimes of man's warring tribes;
An idiot hour destroys what centuries made,
His wanton rage of frenzied hate lays low
The beauty and greatness by his genius wrought
And the mighty output of a nation's toil.*

A few weeks ago a Korean lady wrote to Pundit Nehru a letter in which she deplored how even those who came as champions to save Korea were responsible for unleashing further devastation on the poor country. To state just one single act and follow its concatenation of consequences: the South Korean capital Seoul was bombarded by the North Koreans who professed to come as its liberators. Result—devastation, followed by retreat of the South Koreans. Next come the Americans to relieve the situation. They bombard Seoul again. Result—further devastation, followed by the retreat of the invaders in occupation: the North Koreans. Next enter the Chinese Communists, they bombard again. Result—deeper devastation followed by retreat once more of the liberators in occupation: the South Koreans and the Americans. Now the Americans have bombarded Seoul again to liberate Korea once more from its old "liberators." After such reported bombardments of liberation how much of the unhappy town could possibly have survived? The same thing happened with Poyangang, the capital of North Korea: first came the South Koreans who devastated it—this time as the liberators *en revanche*, next the North Koreans followed by the Chinese communists the latest liberators now in occupation, to be possibly supplanted once more by the South Koreans!

Now it must be remembered that only one act was responsible for all this: the crossing of the 38th parallel by the North Korean "liberators." Not even their worst enemies would assert that they could have anticipated the release of such an avalanche of calamities as the result of just one button pressed: their crossing of a geographical line. And it was *not* an accident: such unforeseen catastrophes were brought off again and again in history by just one misdemeanour, one outrage, one miscalculation. Was Sri Aurobindo guilty of an overstress when he wrote: "An idiot hour destroys what centuries made"?

I remember his reply, long ago in 1924, to my question on "the widespread misery, fear and suffering which afflict men":

"How can you help that so long as men choose as they do to hug ignorance which is at the root of all suffering? As long as they cherish the darkness of attachment rather than the light of liberation and knowledge, how can they expect to see?"† Years later he developed his outlook on pain, its rationale, in his *Savitri*, hinting that albeit,

Where Ignorance is, there suffering too must come,

yet the very suffering, which is the offspring of ignorance serves one, in the Divine enigmatic economy, as a goad to the search for a panacea to the evil of

* Antony (to the dead body of Caesar):
O! pardon me, thou bleeding piece of earth...
Thou art the ruins of the noblest man
That ever lived in the tide of times.
Shakespeare's "Julius Caesar" ... Act III, Scene 1.

SRI AUROBINDO

By DILIP K

suffering, viz. pain and grief:

*Thy grief is a cry of darkness to the Light;
Pain was the first-born of the Inconscience
Which was the body's dumb original base.*

And its *raison d'être* was that it fathered joy, since
pain came first, then only joy could be.

*Pain ploughed the first hard ground of the world-drowse.
By pain a spirit started from the clod
By pain life stirred in the subliminal deep.*

And therefore

*It drew its shapes from the subconscious depths,
Then turned to look upon the world it had made.*

Not only that, pain with its polar opposite joy was a necessary goad to our soul to wake up and look:

*By pain and joy the bright and tenebrous twins
The inanimate world perceived its sentinel soul.*

And the soul's slow and progressive awakening out of the circumambient "world-drowse" (in which it has, naturally, to participate, being itself a part of the world) is, in its turn, necessary because otherwise it can never shed its native clinging to this lethargy of sleep and therefore never initiate any change first in itself and secondly in the Inconscient which is the origin of the primal Inertia and the perpetuator of the status quo. To remedy this, the psychic being in each of us must first recapture its lost consciousness and so come to its own because

Else had the Inconscient never suffered change.

But the Inconscient is the citadel of matter, and matter, having a greater longevity than the most unaging die-hard, is a born imperialist vis-à-vis the future. So it cannot be easily prevailed upon to welcome change. That is why pain has to take a hand as the liberator because, in the last analysis,

*Pain is the hammer of the gods to break
A dead resistance in the mortal's heart,
His slow inertia as of living stone.
If the heart were not forced to want and weep,
His soul would have lain down content, at ease
And never thought to exceed the human start.*

Nietzsche caught something of the Divine Resolve, amounting to a predetermination, when he said: "Der Mensch ist Etwas das ueberwunden werden soll."* But, as Sri Aurobindo points out, this ultimate self-transcendence cannot be achieved if man unwarily sides with the power-addict Demon (Asura) in himself to the exclusion of the love-inebriate God. So Narad, the protagonist of the Divine Gnosis, counsels Aswapati, the deputy of Divine Aspiration:

*O mortal, bear this great world's law of pain,
In thy hard passage through a suffering world
Lean for thy soul's support on Heaven's strength,
Turn towards high Truth, aspire to love and peace!*

But he warns him, withal, against admitting a wrong movement in his impatient exploration of a short cut:

*Haste not towards Godhead on a dangerous road,
Open not thy doorways to a nameless Power,
Climb not to Godhead by the Titan's road.*

Because the deluded Titan is motivated not by the spirit of God-allegiance but by God-defiance and therefore

*Heavenward he clammers on a stair of storms...
He strives with a giant strength to wrest by force
From life and nature the immortal's right...*

Because having grown blind in his lust for quick results,
*He waits not for the outstretched hand of God
To raise him out of his mortality.*

In the Gita we find a description of the salient features of the Asura's character. But Sri Aurobindo's description gives us a much fuller view (because the modern Asura, even as the modern human has become a much more complex being):

*A monopolist of the world-energy,
He dominates the life of common men.
His pain and others' pain he makes his means:
On death and suffering he makes his throne.
In the hurry and clangour of his acts of might,
In a riot of excess of fame and shame,
By the magnitudes of hate and violence,
By the quaking of the world beneath his tread
He matches himself the Eternal's calm
And feels in himself the greatness of a god:
Power in his image of celestial self.*

And therefore he grows and grows in stature till—by the inescapable law of Karma, as the Gita puts it—he identifies himself with the Colossus, Selfhood, the Image of his adoration: *yo yachchradhah sa eva sah*.* That this is not a fanciful nightmare becomes obvious to anyone who looks at what is happening in the world around us, e.g. in and through every

† "Among the Great" (American edition), p. 221 where he also mentions, for the first time in public, what was the aim of his Yoga.

* Man is something that has to be transcended.

IT CAME TO ME

JMAR ROY

power-addict Dictator who inflates himself into a colossal Demon of the vital, a veritable Titan of whom Sri Aurobindo says:

*The Titan's heart is a sea of fire and force:
He exults in the death of things and ruin and fall,
He feeds his strength with his own and others' pain;
In the world's pathos and passion he takes delight,
His pride, his might call for the struggle and pang.
He glories in the sufferings of the flesh
And covers the stigmata with the Stoic's name.*

This is not an overdrawn picture; nor has one to be a mystic or a Yogi to be able to see that this has been one of the primeval causes of human misery. Any dispassionate observer will have to agree here with Sri Aurobindo. To give an instance, I shall quote a passage from the great rational realist-idealist, Lowes Dickenson's *Justice and Liberty*:

"Nietzsche's strong man is not a mere ideal; he is a fact... For it is Power, not wealth or comfort, at which they aim; and in pursuit of that aim they trample under foot all law and all morality... Power being their ideal, they are most conscious of having achieved it when the resistance over which they triumphed has been most vigorous; and what provokes resistance more determined than the prospect of spoliation, ruin and death? The more, therefore, the victims suffer the more 'Overman' rejoices; for the more conscious he is of being strong; and in that sense of strength lies his whole satisfaction in life."

Nietzsche's Overman is synonymous with Russell's Dictator, Sri Aurobindo's Titan and Sri Krishna's Asura. In other words, though each of these thinkers has a different outlook on the world they all focus for us the same type and its dreadful tendency. Studying this type we realise that the time-old lust in humanity to dominate others is as difficult to eradicate from human nature as it is disastrous for the nature itself. When I first came to the Ashram I well remember how I walked its grounds with jaunty steps, with this complacent idea that I was, with all my faults and feelings, a good man. I saw certain wrong movements in me—happily, more blemishes in others—but though I wanted sincerely to get rid of them I never thought that their expulsion was a matter of much urgency. I had certain blissful experiences to turn to from time to time; also some delightful musical or poetical achievements which only strengthened my general conviction that all was well with me here below even as with God on high; and last, though not least, very heartening encouragements from Gurudev and Mother that in spite of my stumblings and depressions I was getting on. Is it any wonder that I should be utterly unconscious of the bloated power-addict that slept within my "innocent and humble self" as I called the being popularly known as Dilip? In one word, I was far from surmising that I had such a tremendous leeway to make up or, to put it in Yogic terminology, that I would have to "transform my nature" step by step, resolutely, ploddingly, ruthlessly and lastly, alas, despondently and that it was going to be such an uphill task. I was still very ignorant about the difficulties of Yoga or rather the hurdles the Yogis had to cross in the past. The actual difficulties I had to encounter in my day to day sadhana of the Ashram life turned out to be very different indeed from those I had imagined and been forewarned against by the worldly-wise. When I came to the Ashram in my exalted mood I thought that I would only have, in the first place, to undergo heroic austerities and in the second to meditate for hours and hours. The first prospect goaded the egoist in me to become even more alive if not kicking, while the second made me simply glow with pride as I said to myself with the great poet A.E.:

*We are in our distant hope
One with all the great and wise:
Comrade, do not turn and grope
For a lesser light that dies.*

Yes, yes, I echoed him again and again:
*Pure at heart we wander now,
We have hopes beyond today
And our quest does not allow
Rest or dreams along the way.*

The first fly that I discovered in the ointment of my self-esteem was when I found that I did not like it at all whenever any of those who used once to obey my will declined to bow down to my wisdom in which I lived and moved and grew progressively: my growing wisdom made my egoism grow too. I had thought that it must work out in the other way: that my egoism should dwindle in proportion as my Yogic wisdom and insight deepened. This, naturally, disconcerted me but that in itself would not have been so serious had I not noted at the same time that my discomfiture was often enough attended with a secret chafing at the Guru's will having his way and not mine. It is not an autobiography I have undertaken so I cannot possibly enlarge on such experiences. Suffice it to say therefore that I came to realise slowly but inescapably that the Asura of whom I had heard so much was not a mythical figure with a multitude of heads and hands but a real resident and cherished guest housed only too willingly by each of us. Only some cherished him more, some less, that is all. I saw, for instance, that whenever any vital hunger in me was underfed he got progressively restive till even the social

trappings of decency became hard to retain to cover his naked ugliness. Years later I read a citation from the great mystic William Law the purport of which is that none can turn towards God without turning his back upon his ego, because none can be fully alive to God till he completely die to his lower nature.

But I must pause here a little to stress an experience of mine which grew from day to day till I could not deny its vivid, concrete reality. I refer to what Gurudev called the "hostile forces". I had indeed read about the Buddha's *Mara*, heard about the Christian Devil and speculated in my fanciful way about ghosts and spirits and monsters which figured in the Tantric writings of certain schools. But having always been exceedingly normal and strong, with no "weird experiences" to vaunt (even though I longed to), I could never take such disembodied entities seriously. What I mean is that though I did not exactly pooh-pooh all such stories as old wives' tales, I never imagined that there could really be in action queer forces such as these which a twentieth-century spiritual seeker might have to reckon in dull earnest on his way to the Divine.

I never saw any spirits not to mention the Devil, though I agreed always with Russell's acceptance of Him as a living reality. Nor did I ever feel any eerie presences (Paul Valérie called these "*les choses absentes*") which left me an aftermath of jittery fears. I did indeed hear from my friends about such macabre things which loomed and waylaid good people. Also I came to witness quite a few sudden unaccountable happenings which terrified the percipients, sometimes even disabled them temporarily. But for all that I could never persuade myself that these might ever be concrete impediments on my way, far less make my mind "go off its handle" as I put it flippantly.

Nevertheless—and here is my point—I had to reckon with them time and again—not indeed with their actual presences, but with the heritage of diffidence and depression they bequeathed, a legacy too heavy to be dismissed nonchalantly. And to make confusion worse confounded, they bred their microbes so fast that before I could pronounce "Alert Armstrong" they would have me "translated like Bottom" from a rational optimist into a ne'er-do-well. I know here I am unlikely to be convincing, the more because I cannot prove my point to those who have not experienced what I have. Notwithstanding, I must still testify to what I have felt again and again, namely, that we can never insulate ourselves completely from forces which encircle us except with the powers which can as concretely shield us as others can strike. To give a typical instance:

I want something from Gurudev or Mother—some support in some matter. It so happens that neither comes forward to oblige me. My self-love gets hurt and then lo, the magic button is pressed and where it was all a laughing garden a moment ago with hopes dancing like flowers, certitudes glowing like sunbeams and aspirations soaring like birds, one sees only doubts blasting like poison-fumes, chafings irrational lie thorns and last, though not least, a sentimental revolt that gesticulates like a demon deprived of his mask. Time and again did this happen to me and often enough, just when I was riding on the top of the weather, there out of a clear sky, a wrong suggestion dropped into me and then bang came the showdown. I know full well how difficult it is to bring home to others the concrete vividness of such experiences, the more because if and when they come to us in ordinary life, that is on non-yogic paths, the depressions do not assail as they do here—with the veritable downrush of a deluge or the storm-hurtle of an avalanche. The reason is that in ordinary life these hostile forces do not need to be as active or organized as they are in Yoga—their *metier* being to thwart all Godward endeavours and in ordinary life people are seldom concentrated on such a task. But when the Godseeker wants to clamber or soar upward, these phalanx themselves quickly in their rebel alarm to be able to act as a sort of earthpull or wing-clipper, shall I say? Or to give another simile, when you float with the tides, all the waves befriend you and carry you on their jubilant crests, but just turn back to swim against them and you will know swiftly what is what! This image seemed to me more apposite especially when I swam against the current and felt all but suffocated by the buffets of the waves. I was reminded of this when years later, a pupil of mine said, nonplussed, that so long as she did not want the Divine the world was so kind and officious and appreciative but it all changed the moment she turned to Yoga for God. I told her what I had realised years ago, that it had to be always more or less like that.

"Had to be why?" she asked, still at sea.

"Because", I answered after I had recounted to her briefly what I had gone through, "Yoga means transcending *Prakriti* or the forces of Nature, which flow all around us like the waves. So long as you are in the swim acquiescing in these you will be automatically upheld and carried forward by them. But since Yoga wants to part company with them they, very naturally, resent such defection and outlaw you as a deserter. You can't expect the services of those you don't propose to oblige by offering concessions. And when, moreover, you want to expel them out of your being which has been their habitat for years and years, won't they get furious and attack from sheer fear of becoming homeless refugees?"

This in itself would not have been so cataclysmic, if I may exploit such a purple word, had not these forces of Nature found the too-willing support of the hostile forces which are sworn to oppose God-seekers everywhere. That is why all spiritual guides have emphasised the urgent need of purifying our emotions so that we may side always with the right ones as against the wrong. To put it differently, we must not allow

* As one's faith (or aspiration) so one becomes.

SRI AUROBINDO CAME TO ME —Continued from page 7

these adverse forces any loophole or handle by sympathising with what we are, alas, too apt to call natural. This may sound easy in theory but it is quite an uphill task in practice, as I found to my bitter cost, and the more I realised this the more grateful I felt towards Gurudev for his unflinching help and guidance, showing me, indefatigably where and how I had swerved from the right attitude as a result of which these forces could creep in imperceptibly through the breaches made thereby. It was primarily his insistence on the right attitude which helped me convict the wrong ones in spite of their masterly pleadings for what we call our *human* ways and *natural* reactions.

But this is known to all Yogis. I have no wish to write a manual of Yoga. I have referred to this only to underline, first, the help and encouragement Gurudev always gave us whenever we erred or slipped; secondly, the security of protection he offered whenever we felt shaky or diffident; and lastly, the invaluable guidance he gave us by acting as an eye-opener to us all, showing us laboriously the cause of the minutest of our backslidings. None who has not been through such ordeals can ever fully realise the concrete help that comes along with the guiding voice of the Pilot. The feeling of reassurance, *abhay*, cannot be described, it has to be experienced: but a sample of the guidance he gave on such occasions I may adduce here which will explain itself. After one such attack he wrote to me:

"The hostile forces exist and have been known to yogic experience ever since the days of the Vedas and Zoroaster in Asia (and the mysteries of Egypt and Cabbala) and in Europe also from old times. These things of course cannot be felt or known so long as one lives in the ordinary mind and its ideas and perceptions; for these there are only two categories of influences recognisable, the ideas and feelings and actions of oneself and others and the play of environment and physical forces; but once one begins to get the inner view of things, it is different. One begins to experience that all is an action of forces, of *Prakriti* psychological as well as physical which play upon our nature and these are conscious forces or are supported by a consciousness or consciousnesses behind. One is in the midst of a big universal working and it is impossible any longer to explain everything as the result of one's own and sole personality. You yourself have at one time written that your crises of despair etc. came upon you as if thrown on you and worked themselves out without your being able to determine or put an end to them. That means an action of universal forces and not merely an independent action of your personality though it is something in your nature of which they make use. But you are not conscious and others also of this intervention and pressure at its source for the reason I state. Those in the Asram who have developed the inner view of things on the vital plane have plenty of experience of the hostile forces. However, you need not personally concern yourself with them so long as they remain incognito. . . . One may have the experiences on the mental plane without this knowledge coming—for there mind and idea predominate and one does not feel the play of Forces—it is only in the vital that that becomes clear. In the mind plane they manifest at most as mental suggestions and not as concrete powers. Also if one looks at things with the Mind only (even though it be the inner Mind) one may see the subtle play of Nature-forces but without recognising the conscious intention which we call hostile."

But Knowledge too has its disadvantages—as I was to discover soon enough—especially when it leads one to glimpse the world of occult forces, however fugitively. To give a typical instance, in my pre-yogic days, whenever I flirted with a wrong suggestion I never dreamt of its virus being manufactured somewhere outside to be injected subsequently into my mind. But with the passage of time I did perceive a fissure in my own being. I could see, with progressive clarity, that what I had hitherto looked upon as an indivisible part of my personality was, in reality, a conglomerate of a variety of disparate influences. This generated in me a deep uneasiness: whither was I going? Why all this fuss in my own being about my own self—these rifts and interstices and what not? But the trouble was that nothing I could do now seemed capable of undoing what had been done. It was as though—to use a simile contrariwise—a drop of curd had been thrown into a bowl of milk whereafter the disintegration of the milk could not be reversed. A ray of light had come to stay in my consciousness and it had thereafter to work as a leaven. The result—I could not recapture my unflawed self-assurance of the pre-yogic days that I was indeed what I took myself to be. This made me desolate as the new knowledge irretrievably soured the sweet milk of self-complacency. I struggled in vain to have it restored. For do what I would, I simply could not revert to what I had been converted from. For instance, I could now see clearly that whenever I toyed with a wrong suggestion some part of me was glad while some other part was unhappy resenting it as an intrusion. What made me unhappier still was that I became more and more conscious, as days passed, of a wilful encouragement somewhere. But as this made me feel disloyal to my Guru, I tried in my clever (?) way to rationalize it into legitimacy. "Oh, keep an open mind, don't you know," a part of me said to myself coaxingly. "Don't you invite blindness, my boy! Why must you accept everything you are told as gospel truth? Watch, weigh and sift by all means, but don't surrender your native inviolable right to be a judge of your own reactions. If an idea is burgeoning within you don't show it the door in this offhand manner because somebody commands you to. Remember that you have an inalienable right to your own ideas, you can't possibly grow to your ultimate stature without their friendly help. Every-

thing that happens to you can give you a leg up, you know, provided you accept its aid in the right spirit. And, dash it all, your individuality is the most precious part of your integral self, isn't it? How can you then—you, a born lover of freedom—will yourself into blind slavery and have it liquidated? How can you possibly forget that the Divine has fashioned your individual ego to be harmonised into a distinctive flower—not to be squeezed out into an amorphous jelly. Ugh!"—and so on—endless variations on one theme: do not surrender.

As time flowed past I became progressively conscious of the fallacy of such specious reasoning, till in the end I saw, like St. Augustine of yore that it was not freedom I ached for but licence. I saw that my higher self was not only willing but eager to surrender to Gurudev's will because it could well do without this so-called freedom to follow the ego's unruly cravings and self-will. The trouble arose, as I grew to realise, because my lower nature did not want to toe the line—to waive its native right to its unlovely enjoyments.

But my lower nature, like Goldsmith's famous parson, "though vanquished argued still" and so did its utmost to resist transformation, till at last matters were brought to a head, and thus decided for me, by a horrible experience of a friend and co-disciple, P—. He used to be in those days a neighbour of mine and as he did not know English very well, I used to write for him to Sri Aurobindo about his experiences. And he had had wonderful experiences to his credit—seen marvellous visions, heard thrilling voices, savoured exquisite delights—in short, had already "drunk deep at the Pierian spring" of the Spirit. And yet his lower nature had known no better and would still drag him away to his old pleasure-haunts, as he used to tell me in those days with bitter regrets.* "I do want to come here and stay permanently", he used to tell me off and on, "but alas, I can't. I cannot even stay here a couple of months at a stretch. I get restive and peaceless"—etc. His long tale of woes staggered me as in those days I was still a raw novice in Yoga and had only just begun to step across the border of ordinary consciousness. So I could not account at all for his restlessness after the tremendous harvest he had reaped in the field of spiritual experiences till on that unforgettable day when he came running to me in the afternoon and told me, completely unnerved, what he had just visioned, with open eyes. He spoke in Hindi mixed with Bengali:

"I was praying to Gurudev, you know," he said, "for strength to make a long stay here when I saw an ugly little brat of the colour of coal tar—a stinking, stunted mannikin—come out of my body and beg before me: 'Oh give me something. You have enough to live on but I am starving!' And he fell at my feet crying, Dilip Babu—just fancy that! Oh I will never sleep again thinking of this nightmare!" And so on, he whimpered, in dire straits.

It was indeed hair-raising, as I wrote to Gurudev, who wrote back to P (I read out the letter to him) that the ugly brat was an exteriorisation of his lower vital being of lust and concupiscence and possessiveness. "Do you understand now," he wrote, "why you are not allowed to stay here? It is this formation of your life in the past. He wants food which is literally denied here. That is why you have to depart again and again. Your lower vital being is still too much alive and kicking to let you stay and till he changes I fear this see-saw in your nature is likely to continue".

I quote the letter from memory but as P's account of the repulsive apparition left an indelible impression on my mind I am sure I have given that substance of Gurudev's letter to him correctly. But to come back to my own experience.

P's account of his lower self made such a dent on my mind that I resolved thenceforward to be more drastic with my lower nature, even though being a born realist plus sceptic I knew that do what I would the see-saw in my own being was hardly less unlikely to cease overnight. Nevertheless I had no intention of yielding to the appeals of my lower vital being in spite of the oscillations. I cannot claim that I never stumbled, but I do claim that I endeavoured to tighten the rein when my horse wanted to make for the ditch.

But the curious thing was that although I knew now that all such voices heard by me outwelled from the Underworld, yet the very fact that they found in me a sympathiser still caused me to doubt, in spite of myself, whether they would really be voices extraneous to my private world of self. Between them, Gurudev and P had indeed all but convinced me that strange invisible beings were ambushed all around us, ready to pounce and batten on our weaknesses and make us their helpless puppets: nevertheless, could one, in dull earnest, take all such voices and visions at their face value? Was it not too outlandish, even grotesque that such an alien voice should be able to trespass into my heart's privacy without my knowledge and despite my vigilance?

But alas I found, as soon as I reviewed it in retrospect, that my personality had not one but many gates and as many gate-keepers, so that even when vigilance was wideawake at the main entrance some other could and always did open the back-door. So it happened, again and again, that the hostile suggestion or impulse did get admitted in spite of my resolution to shut it out. To put it differently, the more I watched myself the more I was reminded of Pope's *Essay on Man*;

*Aspiring to be gods, if angels fell,
Aspiring to be angels, men rebel.*

(Continued on page 10)

* He gave up these pleasures later on, a change which amounted, in his case, to a feat and so impressed all his friends including myself.

POETIC IMAGERY IN 'SAVITRI'

BY RAJANIKANT MODY

Continued from issue of February 21

Next we have some images drawn from plant-life and flowers and gardening. The first one is applied to Life:

*Only she clung with her roots to the safe earth,
Thrilled dumbly to the shocks of ray and breeze
And put out tendril fingers of desire. (105)*

The next one is a fine image pertaining to the lotus:

*In gleaming clarities of amethyst air
The chainless and omnipotent Spirit of Mind
Brooded on the blue lotus of the Idea. (106)*

Then there is a lovely image following upon another lovely image:

*Mountains and trees stood there like thoughts from God.
Pranked butterflies, the conscious flowers of air.*

And here is an equally vivid picture drawn in a single line:

He tore desire up from its bleeding roots. (108)

The following one is taken from gardening and is applied to the world of Falsehood:

*There Good, a faithless gardener of God,
Watered with virtue the world's upas-tree
And, careful of the outward word and act,
Engrafted his hypocrite blooms on native ill. (109)*

Then we take images drawn from natural scenery like mountains, sea, sky, moon, etc.

*There walled apart by its own innerness
In a mystical barrage of dynamic light
He saw a lone immense high-curved world-pile
Erect like a mountain chariot of the Gods
Motionless under an inscrutable sky
As if from Matter's plinth and viewless base
To a top as viewless, a carved sea of worlds
Ascended towards breadths immeasurable. (110)*

Another bunch of images we have already noted before under 13-15 and we shall not repeat them here. The following is a conventional image but used with a charm all its own:

Her body of beauty mooned the seas of bliss. (111)

Then there is a lovely mixed image:

*An architect hewing out self's living rock,
Phenomenon built Reality's summer-house
On the beaches of the sea of Infinity. (112)*

And the next one is a picture conjured up in a single line

A foam-leap travelling from the waves of bliss. (113)

And another one:

Deep glens of joy and crooning waterfalls. (114)

And still another:

Imagination's comet-trail of dream. (115)

The following is a mixed image, partly drawn from Nature and partly from human life, and somewhat reminiscent of Shelley and Francis Thompson:

*The nude God-children in their playfields ran
Smiting the winds with splendour and with speed;
Of storm and sun they made companions,
Sported with the white mane of tossing seas. (116)*

This image of playfields occurs elsewhere in a different context:

*The little plot of our mortality
Touched by this tenant from the heights became
A playground of the living Infinite. (117)*

There are two beautiful images taken from agriculture. The first is applied to Inspiration, in which she is called.

*A gleaner of infinitesimal grains of Truth,
A sheaf-binder of infinite experience. (118)*

The second is applied to man:

*A lightning from the heights that think and plan,
Ploughing the air of life with vanishing trails,
Man, sole awake in an unconscious world
Aspires in vain to change the cosmic dream. (119)*

The image of grains given above were "grains of Truth", while quite the opposite is the case of the "earthly being" described in the following lines:

*Its treacherous elements spread like slippery grains
Hoping the incoming Truth might stumble and fall. (120)*

There are two images of passport, which are quite different from each other:

*Assigned to meet the cosmic mystery
In the dumb figure of the material world,
His passport of entry false and his personage,
He is compelled to be what he is not. (121)*

This is the description of the plight of man and so is the next:

*Our spirits depart discarding a futile life
Into the black unknown or with them take
Death's passport into immortality. (122)*

There are two images which somewhat resemble each other:

*A mounting endless possibility
Climbs high upon a topless ladder of dream. (123)*

The second one shows the stair of Time:

*And things long known and actions always done
Are to its clinging hold a balustrade
Of safety on the perilous stair of Time. (124)*

This figure is applied to the "pigmy habitual Thought" we have referred to before. The next image relates to "the Greater Life".

*Across a luminous dream of spirit-space
She builds creation like a rainbow bridge
Between the original Silence and the Void. (125)*

This idea of creation becoming a bridge between the Silence and the Void is a lovely idea. The double image of bridge and rainbow is extremely happy and full of significance.

There is another pair of ideas which also is equally beautiful and equally apt:

*The immobile's ocean-silence saw him pass,
An arrow leaping through eternity
Suddenly shot from the tense bow of Time. (126)*

This refers to the Traveller of the Worlds, King Aswapaty. The originality of the image of the arrow shot from the bow of Time is very striking. A very similar image is to be found in the following line:

*In every hour loosed from the quiver of Time
There rose a song of new discovery,
A bow-twang's hum of young experiment. (126A)*

In the first it is the image of bow that is applied to Time, while in this second it is the image of quiver. But there all the resemblance stops. For the arrow in the first case is Aswapaty himself and he is shown to be leaping out of Time into the Timeless Eternity, while in the second case it is the hour that is the arrow.

In the next image also there is wonderful freshness:

*Alone he moved watched by the infinity
Around him and the Unknown above. (127)*

And the sense of immensity it suggests stirs the profoundest depths of our being. A similar feeling is stirred within us when we read:

*The dire velamen and the bottomless crypt
Between which life and thought for ever move,
Forbidden still to cross the dim dread bounds,
The guardian darknesses mute and formidable,
Empowered to circumscribe the wingless spirit
In the boundaries of Mind and Ignorance,
Vanished rescinding their enormous rules:
Once figure of creation's vain ellipse,
The expanding zero lost its giant curve.
A boundless being in a measureless Time
Invaded Nature with the infinite;
He saw unpathed, unvalled his titan scope. (128)*

The image of two fires joining with each other is seen in two places, but in quite different moods and contexts:

*Emotion clasped emotion in two hearts,
They felt each other's thrill in the flesh and nerves
Or melted each in each and grew immense
As when two houses burn and fire joins fire. (129)*

*Yet were there regions where these absolutes met
And made a circle of bliss with married hands;
Light stood embraced by light, fire wedded fire. (130)*

Now we shall take some other images which could not be taken in groups, but are exceedingly beautiful. The first one is a mixed figure:

*The black Inconscient swung its dragon tail
Lashing a slumberous Infinite by its force
Into the deep obscurities of form:
Death lay beneath him like a gate of sleep. (131)*

This is a very daring picture and a very suggestive one too.

*A finer substance in a subtler mould
Embodies the divinity earth but dreams;
Its strength can overtake joy's running feet;
Overleaping the fixed hurdles set by Time,
The rapid net of an intuitive clasp
Captures the fugitive happiness we desire. (132)*

In these six lines or, rather, in the last four of them, there are more than one image huddled together. Time receives many images, each lovelier than the other. Here are some:

*Out of that formless stuff Time mints his shapes. (133)
A song of pleasure on the lips of Time. (134)*

Many other images we have already noted before, e.g. 16, 26, 27, 42, 45, 46, 53, 63 and 132. Talking of Time, we may mention two images applied to days:

(120) III.3. p. 289. (121) III.4. p. 306. (122) II.5. p. 153. (123) II.6. p. 161.
(124) II.10. p. 224. (125) II.6. p. 116.
(126) I.5. p. 73. (126A) I.3. p. 30. (127) II.1. p. 87. (128) I.5. p. 75-76.
(129) II.6. p. 170. (130) II.12. p. 257. (131) I.5. p. 73. (132) II.2. p. 102.
(133) II.3. p. 110. (134) Ibid. p. 116.

(105) Ibid. p. 144. (106) II.II. p. 241. (107) V.3. p. 17. (108) III. 3. p. 289.
(109) II.8. p. 201. (110) II.1. p. 89-90. (111) III.2. p. 286. (112) III.3. p. 299.
(113) V.3. p. 20. (114) II.9. p. 213 (115) II.3. p. 110. (116) II.3. p. 115. (117)
I.3. p.23. (118) Ibid. p. 37. (119) III.4. p. 304-305.

This brilliant courtyard of the House of Days. (135)

A fortunate gait of days in tranquil air. (136)

The image of a ship foundering occurs in two places:

A fruitful world-wide Ignorance foundered there. (137)

In the second place where it is used there is a double image:

His self-bound nature foundered as in fire. (138)

The image of a house also is used twice. Once in the following lines, where it is a mixed image:

*Our mind is a house haunted by the slain past,
Ideas soon mummified, ghosts of old truths,
Gods' spontaneities tied with formal strings
And packed into drawers of reason's trim bureau,
A grave of great lost opportunities,
Or an office for misuse of soul and life. (139)*

And again in:

*He saw in Night the Eternal's shadowy veil,
Knew death for a cellar of the house of life.
In destruction felt creation's hasty pace. (140)*

The following lines refer to the "agents of shadowy Force" of evil:

*The doors of God they have locked with keys of creed
And shut out by the Law his tireless Grace.
Along all Nature's lines they have set their posts
And intercept the caravans of light. (141)*

Then there is a beautiful image drawn from colonisation:

*Ourselves are citizens of that mother State,
Adventurers, we have colonised Matter's night,
But now our rights are barred, our passports void;
We live self-exiled from our heavenlier home. (142)*

The mother State referred to here is the Kingdom of the Greater or Ideal Mind. We may note, in passing, the image of passport given here and compare it with the two already given under 121 and 122.

And here is a modernist image of exquisite beauty utilised for spiritual ends; it is applied to 'a subtle archangel race', 'theoricians of unknowable truths', on one of the levels of the Greater Mind:

*Imposing schemes of knowledge on the Vast
They clamped to syllogisms of finite thought
The free logic of an infinite consciousness,
Grammered the hidden rhythms of Nature's dance,
Critiqued the plot of the drama of the worlds,
Made figure and number a Key to all that is:*

(135) II.2. p. 105. (136) II.3. p. 116. (137) III.1. p. 279. (138) V.1. p. 8. (139) II.13. p. 260. (140) II.8. p. 210.

The psycho-analysis of cosmic Self

Was traced, its secrets hunted down, and read

The unknown pathology of the Unique. (143)

In the fourth line in the above quotation we get an image which is a mixed one for Nature's dance. There is another strangely mixed image drawn from the art of dancing, this time the combination being made of Eastern and Western imagery:

*Creation and destruction waltzed inarmed
On the bosom of a torn and quaking earth;
All reeled into a world of Kali's dance. (144)*

From these images taken from dancing, we go to an image drawn from drama and stage:

*No wandering ray of Heaven can enter there,
Armoured, protected by their lethal masks,
As in a studio of creative Death
The giant sons of Darkness sit and plan
The drama of the earth, their tragic stage. (145)*

We have already seen some images applied to human Reason. Here is one more taken from science:

*Arriving late from a far plane of thought
Came reason, the squat godhead artisan,
To her narrow house upon a ridge in Time.
Armed with her lens and measuring-rod and probe,
She looked upon an object universe
And the multitudes that in it live and die
And the body of Space and the fleeing soul of Time,
And took the earth and stars into her hands
To try what she could make of these strange things. (146)*

And another image also applied to Reason, is the following:

*At will she spaces in thin air of mind
Like maps in the school-house of intellect hung,
Forcing wide Truth into a narrow scheme,
Her numberless warring strict philosophies. (147)*

An effective image is:

A piston brain pumps out the shapes of thought. (148)

And a quite unexpected image and a daring one at that, is:

*A million faces wears her knowledge here
And every face is turbaned with a doubt. (149)*

(To be continued)

(141) II.8. p. 205. (142) II.11. p. 239. (143) II.11. p. 245. (144) II.10 p. 232. (145) II.8. p. 206. (146) II.11. p. 227. (147) Ibid. pp. 228-29. (148) I. 2. p. 20. (149) II.10. p. 229.

The Magic Hour

While sun and wind were conspiring together
To frolic among the leaf and the flower—
A 'hush' came upon the world and the weather
And whispered a Silence into the hour . . .

Thou art hunger, allure, the breath of the longing
For sunlight that dazzles mere mortal eyes,
The moonbeams entrancing the oceans, and thronging
The starlit spaces of tranquil skies.

Thou art the veiled lamp in the Night
That steals like a luminous mist in the mind,
That thrills the heart with a sudden light
While hiding a vaster Light behind.

Thou art the beckoning star beyond
This vision of mortality—
The urge to aspire and yet the bond
That fetters our humanity.

The Nile that through the desert runs,
The Brook named Kerith flowing deep
In the heart—the hidden light of suns
In the cave of forgotten sleep.

Thou art the hammer-strokes of noon,
The beaten gold of a burnished sky—
The flawless calm of a tropic moon
Seen from the edge of eternity.

Thou the first mysterious flood
Of passion when the world was born,
The early flush of the rose, and the blood-
Red stain of the awakening dawn.

NORMAN DOWSETT

The Mother of Mothers

Up, hoist her banner and march on, forward,
Singing: "We will to Victory!"
And children of our Mother Divine,
We glow with her flame of purity.

Ind's glory and pride on us depend
Her honour we must with our lives defend,
Her beauty's bloom that knows no end
May we enhance—sing, sing: "We are free
And will to the last, great Victory!"

Loyal to the Sun's inviolate beams,
We nurse in our souls Truth-Pearl that gleams
And neighbouring Light no cloud ever dims,
May we one be with Light—sing, sing: "We are free
And will to the last, great Victory!"

Devotion, courage and love we claim
With faith's demand no doubt can tame:
To build a new world naught shall maim!
May our dream come true—sing, sing: "We are free
And will to the last, great Victory!"

(Translated by Dilip Kumar Roy from Indira's Hindi song
for the children of Sri Aurobindo's Ashram.)

SRI AUROBINDO CAME TO ME —Continued from page 8

And we don't rebel merely but also refuse to learn from our past mistakes, insist on our right to plead for our folly with the wisest of reasonings and, lastly—to quote from Gurudev's letter to me—resist "the change from the human to the divine consciousness" in order to be able to "defend its right to sorrow and suffering". I was reminded again and again of Sri Ramkrishna's simile about the camel which even when its mouth bleeds from munching "prickly grass" will persist in munching the same grass. In other words, I insisted, as Gurudev pointed out in a long letter, "on the Divine becoming human and remaining in the human consciousness" and withal protested "against any attempt to make the human divine."

And that is why that "bleeding piece of earth", human nature, has bled stanchlessly since the dawn of time and the soul of man has still to sigh over what his life remains, to this day:

*A seeker in a dark and-obscure place,
An ill-armed warrior facing dreadful odds,
An imperfect worker given a baffling task,
An ignorant judge of problems Ignorance made,
Its heavenward flights reach closed and keyless gates
Its glorious outbursts peter out in mire.**

* "Savitri" Book VI: The Book of Fate.

REIGN OF TERROR IN RED CHINA

SPECIAL DRIVE AGAINST RELIGIOUS ORGANISATIONS

BY GUY WINT

The reason why most people prefer that social progress should be by evolution rather than by revolution is that revolution nearly always causes a vast human slaughter.

The great revolutions—such as the French and the Russian—are remembered for their reigns of terror. The terror did not come at the beginning of either of these revolutions; in the first few months there was surprising moderation, even in Russia. But as soon as the revolutionary Governments were in difficulties, they turned on their own peoples with a ruthless savagery which shocked the civilised world.

The same is happening in China today. In the first months after they gained power the Chinese Communists practised systematic clemency. Though they demanded obedience and were a very exacting Government, they did not make the Chinese people tremble for their lives. That moderate phase of the revolution ended when the Peking Government plunged into the Korean war.

As time goes by, China's decision to intervene in Korea will probably be seen as one of the most fateful events of our time. It has set in motion a train of events in world affairs which is very threatening. In domestic matters it has started the Chinese reign of terror, which looks like being as sanguinary as that of the Jacobins and Bolsheviks.

Death Penalty

On February 21, the Peking Go-

vernment issued a decree prescribing the death penalty for a very large number of offences. It was even laid down as the punishment for those who in the time of the Kuomintang had fought the Communist revolution and who, since the Communist triumph, had not redeemed themselves by "meritorious service". The decree is drafted in such a way as to include anybody whom the Communist may wish to get rid of. It lays the Chinese people at their mercy. To show how seriously the Government regarded the decree, Meo Tse-tung signed it personally, a thing which is very unusual with ordinances in Communist China.

Of course everything will depend on the way in which the decree is enforced. It might have been supposed that it was intended to give the Government emergency powers which it would use only in extremities. But since the decree was passed there has been a dreadful increase in the number of executions. It is true that the number has been very much exaggerated in the propaganda reports of the Kuomintang Government in Formosa. But the Peking Government has itself been announcing long lists of those executed. At least it is better that it should be frank about this instead of trying to conceal the truth. But it shows also that its policy is one of deliberately instilling fear.

The executed are usually described as being either former Kuomintang officers, unrepentant "reactionaries", or "special agents". During the Korean war the Kuomintang

Government has been able to stir up increased guerilla resistance to the Communists on the mainland. This has made the Communists very uneasy. They see "special agents" of the Kuomintang everywhere.

Wave of Arrests

It is not necessary to have committed any specific action to qualify for the death penalty. Peking Radio describes how "reactionaries" are being sentenced to death for refusal to confess and register themselves as such. It is easy to imagine the condition in a Communist state, of people who have been registered as "reactionaries". But not to register is a capital offence.

People are being sentenced for alleged crimes committed many years ago. One man executed recently in Peking was alleged to have taken part in the execution of a Communist professor 24 years ago. In Peking a recent wave of arrests was described as necessary because of the sabotage taking place in the city. Fifty-nine tramcars had been burned, and the power plant damaged. The Communists' newspapers asked: "Are we not justified in putting an end to such appalling incidents?" But in fact this sabotage really took place in September, 1949.

A special drive is being made against religious organisations. Buddhists and Taoists are the chief targets. In Shantung, 502 Taoist leaders have been arrested recently.

Eleven were executed early this month.

Under instruction from Peking, the provincial prosecution officers are reopening cases already dealt with. Not long ago 4,000 people were arrested in the city of Chungking.

Public Executions

A shocking feature of this reign of terror is the use of the executions as a political show. Public executions are always regarded as a mark of barbarism in a society. But in New China, the Communist radio is constantly announcing executions which have taken place in front of huge rallies of people, sometimes as many as 50,000. Sometimes the mob itself has taken part in the sentencing of the accused.

There was an ugly case a few days back, which happened in Peking itself, the capital of Red China. Twenty-five accused persons were brought before 5,500 "People's Representatives". A high dignitary presided and asked: "What are we going to do with these important special agents, bandit leaders, stubborn bandits, despots and leaders of secret religious societies?" The mob shouted back: "Shoot them... revenge the people".

This terror will have a deep effect on the way in which the Chinese revolution is regarded in the outside world.

(Special Feature from British Information Services)

THE MISTAKE ABOUT MACARTHUR —Continued from page 12

the high percentage of nearly 45. Such a grudge cannot help diminishing in subtle ways the co-operative spirit at the moment and within a year's time it may even spell the fall of Truman, which would indeed be a deplorable turn of events. Let us hope the uproar caused by the President's precipitate action will soon die down. But what will repair the damage done by lopping off one-half of the admirable double centre of anti-Communist inspiration which has so successfully enabled the free world to hold its own against Stalin in the crucial test of both mind and body in Korea?

When we say all this, we must not refuse to appreciate the ticklish position in which MacArthur now and again put Truman. It was never easy to keep him within the limits of official orders. We should be unjust to the President if we deny the exasperation which the Supremo caused him on more than one occasion by his personal relationship with Chiang as well as by his forthright utterances to the press. Truman had reason to complain. But the complaint could only have been legitimate on the score that MacArthur was too big for the post of a mere general obeying orders framed by politicians not always sure of their own minds. The cure for the somewhat anomalous situation lay in clearer grasp of

objectives at the top and in going as far as one could in making the post big enough for the man. At least, it might have been remembered that there was no actual disregard by MacArthur of directives concerning the campaign itself: whatever his frettings at the short sight he often found in his directors, he never took the bit between his teeth and ran away. His differences remained on the plane of ideas. So long as he did not exceed his orders in the field itself, he should not have been penalised by a curt dismissal. Even his jumping the official gun by that offer of truce was not serious enough an offence from the concrete and practical point of view: it did not mean any genuine subjection of the political department to the military. A soldier in command is entitled to some initiative, and when the soldier happens to be endowed with military genius of the first order as well as with far-reaching vision of the evil of Communist expansionism much should be forgiven him. To dismiss him is an immeasurably greater blunder than any independence of thought he may show in matters generally considered as falling outside a soldier's scope. The free world can only pray that the consequences of this blunder may not prove too serious.

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THE MISTAKE ABOUT MACARTHUR

By "ARGUS"

The dismissal of General MacArthur from supreme command of the U.N. forces in Korea is one of those acts whose consequences can be averted only by what we may conceive as God's grace. To hail it as a far-reaching decision in the cause of peace is to be blind to the real nature of the Korean war.

This war is being waged against powers that are bent on arresting man's evolution and fixing him into a cast-iron type in which the creative intellectual and spiritual possibilities of the individual are annulled and every human unit is reduced to an efficient machine serving the materialistic dogmatism, the collectivist tyranny and the imperialist ambition of a small group that has under Stalin's leadership enthroned in its heart the Titan as opposed to the God in man. The war, therefore, is one on which the whole future of civilisation hangs. If in any way it ends in favour of the Communist dictators, if it does not drive home to them the determination on the democracies' part neither to appease them nor to compromise with them, if it makes them believe that they can succeed in even a small measure in their attempt to spread their totalitarian tentacles, it will have been fought in vain and the blood, sweat and tears of thousands will have been wasted.

The people who can see this war to the right conclusion are those alone who carry like a fire in their minds the sense of its real nature. Of course it cannot be expected that every anti-Communist should understand the metaphysics of the distinction between the God in man and the Titan (or as we say in India, the Asura). But there are both thinkers and men of action who feel intensely the sinister character of Stalinism and when a person becomes almost an embodiment of that intense feeling he qualifies to be a leader of the campaign against this evil—provided, no doubt, that he is not a narrow fanatic with uncontrolled and undirected energy. If he is one with a wide and various experience, clear and many-sided vision, positive talent for organisation and administration, and, to crown all, genius in military matters, then he is *par excellence* the crusader, so to speak, who can deal the crippling blow to the arch-enemy of the Light that is upon man's face.

Such a one is General MacArthur. He seems as if born with the mission of checking Communism. Nobody can hold a candle to his clarity of insight into Stalin's ruthless and conscienceless ambition to dominate the world and put permanent fetters on the human mind. Nobody can come anywhere near his brilliant grasp of Far-Eastern strategy and his dynamic leadership. The only charge possible against him is that he makes uninhibited pronouncements on political issues. But let us look at his chief pronouncements. He declared a long time back that Formosa was vital in any fight with Communism in the Far-East and that therefore it should not be exposed to invasion from the mainland. This is but the bare truth and the Korean war has fully borne it out and the U.N. can ignore it only at the cost of all liberty in Asia and of all security in the Pacific. MacArthur also said that Mao Tse-tung intervened out of no fear about the safety of hydroelectric installations on the Yalu but with the one aim of driving the U.N. forces into the sea. This again is nothing save the truth: the so-called Chinese volunteers have openly stated their aim to expel those forces from all Korea. MacArthur has recently affirmed that the Chinese Nationalists now entrenched in Formosa should be allowed and aided to open a second front on the Chinese mainland. It is difficult to understand why Chiang Kai-shek whose representative has still a seat on the Security Council should not be permitted to help the U.N. effort in some way when the U.N. has branded Red China as aggressor. The justification for neutralising his troops in fairness to Mao whose plans for invading Formosa are also being nullified by the U.S. Seventh Fleet is no longer there, since Mao has hurled himself into the Korean arena. At least, there is no lack of wisdom in urging the U.N. heads to contemplate the use, direct or indirect, of the trained troops that are lying idle in an island next door to Korea and that could by a diversion relieve a little of the pressure on the G.I.'s. Finally, MacArthur has chafed against the restrictions placed on him as regards bombing Chinese bases beyond the Yalu and although he has scrupulously observed the restrictions he has warned the Reds that if they do not conclude a truce they will only create conditions in which the bombing of Manchuria will be inevitable. Here too is common sense and an attitude which promises greater results with an enemy of Mao's type—especially in view of the giant build-up reported to be in progress on the Manchurian border. The hysteria we often find the moment there is any talk of carrying the war into the enemy's country can do nothing but harm: Mao must be made to feel the U.N.'s readiness to take all measures necessary to stop him from being a pernicious intruder in Korea. It is almost certain that the Chinese interventionists have been camouflaged as "volunteers" in order to keep their Government uncommitted and leave a loop-hole for their getting out of Korea without much official loss of face in the event of things becoming too hot. A firm threat to bomb Manchuria would even today send Mao's troops scuttling home. World War III is more likely to be averted than incited by a resolution to stand no nonsense from Peking.

Even MacArthur's dictum that the Chinese would not intervene because of the crossing of the 38th Parallel or because of the "home-by-Christmas" offensive was not beside the mark. Substantial intervention took place on account of the U.N.'s hesitation in condemning Mao as soon as the first batch of "volunteers" was

sighted—a hesitation that had never been expected. Everything that MacArthur has said has been a sign of genuine sagacity—and nothing that he has done has exceeded the political decisions taken by the U.N. His sole crime of commission is that, apart from making pronouncements of a political character, he offered a truce to the Chinese Communists ahead of the U.N. It seems that the U.N. had an identical proposal ready and had sent the General the whole plan for his comments. He, instead of just commenting, took it upon himself to for all the offer. This has very understandably riled his chiefs—particularly embarrassing has been the minatory finger waved by the General at the Reds. Not that the chiefs at home are blind to the necessity of attacking Manchuria if Mao sends out a second mammoth force, especially with large-scale air-support, as he is rumoured to be on the point of doing. But they are inclined to be soft and suave, they do not wish to bristle Mao up, they still expect a change of heart, they do not believe that only the shaking of a fist in his face would make him sit up and take notice. In other words, they fail to realise the kind of force that is at the back of the Communist offensive—the Titan, the *Asura*, who can never be mended but only ended, since there is nothing evolutionary about him. No one in his senses wants a world war: what is wanted is the resolute containment of Communism in the hope that Communism may end by internal disruption and revolt; but when part of the containment is the hurling back of armies that have broken the peace and committed aggression the slightest softness will tend to undermine the military effort and give an extra lease of life to the aggressive tendency. The MacArthurian gesture is the only right one. If he made it out of turn, he might deserve a reprimand, but to give him the sack is folly indeed.

This folly will be sheer manna to Mao. Either he may take advantage of it by coming to some sort of truce that would give him an opportunity to strengthen himself more while giving the U.N. the false impression that he means peace, or else he may hasten to launch a second attack in the conviction that with the removal of the greatest, wisest and cleverest embodiment of dynamic anti-Communism from the field he would be able to administer to the U.N. such a shaking as would drive them into more and more conciliatory actions. The basic attitude of the Soviet world towards the change of command is not appreciative in the least. The Russian *Literary Gazette* sums up the change as merely "convincing evidence of the confusion in the camp of the American war-mongers." And it adds: "Now when the failure of Wall Street's policy is plain, Truman has decided to remove the compromised General. However, regardless of who conducts it—MacArthur or his successor Ridgway—the policy of aggression can only end in disgraceful failure." Surely, such an attitude is hardly conducive to Mao's arriving at any settlement worth the U.N.'s while it can only spur him to exploit MacArthur's absence to the top of his abilities.

On the Korean front, therefore, the exit of MacArthur can only spell harm. Has it done any good on the home front? Britain had been reported to be very fidgety over the Supremo's airing of independent views. But there was no sign of any future split between Britain and the U. S. A. Mr. Attlee's Government would have been satisfied with a strong reprimand. There appears to have been no valid reason to set Britain at ease by so drastic a step as giving MacArthur his ticket of leave. Britain is quite misguided in pleading for kinder treatment to Mao's regime: her persistent recommendation for a seat to his delegate in the U. N. and her constant advice to Truman to be as amiable as possible towards Mao without actually licking his boots are things to be discouraged rather than afforded consideration, for evidence is daily mounting that Red China, far from following a policy of caution and restraint, is increasingly living up to the disdain voiced at the very start for neutrality and is getting further and further integrated with Stalin's totalitarianism. Time would have convinced Britain how dangerously wrong she had been and whatever fissure had been observed between her mind and America's would have closed. In any case, the fissure was never irremediable: the British Government, though clearly gratified at MacArthur's removal, had not at all expected it and was genuinely surprised. In the international sphere, this removal was in excess of the need of the hour.

In the United States, it has proved an issue controversial in the extreme. There is a crack in public opinion from end to end. MacArthur is not less a hero with the Republican Party than Truman with the Democrats. And this is but natural, for he is, to say the least, as vital to the anti-Communist war as the President himself. The two are the double centre of effective inspiration in this matter. The absence of any one from the immediate official drive against Mao would be a most regrettable loss to the cause. What has happened is worse. It sets the one against the other and half of America will tend to lose confidence in Truman. As a result, the fully concentrated and concerted attention the Korean problem demands will be lacking. We expect that MacArthur, after a legitimate attempt at self-vindication, will gallantly refuse to head any direct opposition to Truman. He seems too good a patriot to create radical distraction at a critical time like the present. He seems too good a soldier to make himself a real stumbling block in the midst of a battle where the main thing is to ensure a united push. But he is bound to defend himself and a smouldering grudge against the President is bound to remain in that percentage of the nation which constitutes the Republican Party—

Continued on page 11