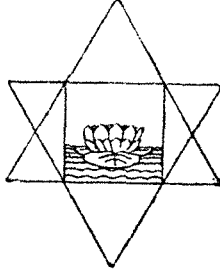


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The Supramental is a truth and its advent is in the very nature of things inevitable . . .

I believe the descent of this Truth opening the way to a development of divine consciousness here to be the final sense of the earth evolution.

SRI AUROBINDO

1951

1951

*A new Light shall break upon the earth,
a new world shall be born: the things that
were promised shall be fulfilled.*

Sri Aurobindo

*Translated from the Mother's
"Prayers and Meditations"*

MOTHER INDIA

MONTHLY REVIEW OF CULTURE

"Great is Truth and it shall prevail"

Managing Editor :
K. R. PODDAR

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K. D. SETHNA

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“LET THE LIGHT OF THE TRUTH BE BORN UPON EARTH FROM TO-DAY AND FOR EVER.”

These are the exalted and powerful words the Mother gave for February 21, her birthday, to a Bengali periodical which seeks inspiration from her and Sri Aurobindo. They are a most significant pronouncement for all who would be the instruments of the Divine.

First, coming as they do on the day of her own birth, they reveal the essence of the Mother's mission. It is the light of the Truth she incarnates in our midst—the supreme Perfection which has to be brought into all the forms and modes of earth-life in order to make that life no longer a limited and laborious gamble under the conditions of a manifold ignorance but a large and triumphant expression of the divine Knowledge-Force.

Secondly, they imply that the bringing of the supreme Perfection has to be at the same time a revolution and an evolution. It must, no doubt, reverse the existent state of things, the falsehood under which life has so far proceeded. Yet the reversal must be no superimposed and therefore precariously poised splendour. It must be an evolutionary efflorescence of what lies involved in the heart of matter and vitality and mind, a development from the depths of the human, an issuing of the future from the womb of the past, an organic outburst, a being born. The Truth will thus be a fulfilment and not an annulment of Nature.

Thirdly, the message indicates with unmistakable clearness that the Mother's mission, the Aurobindonian work that is hers, is not a brief dazzle for the earth-consciousness. Here is no flash of glory which comes from the height to the abyss but has to return to its heavenly home after a miraculous display in the abode of darkness. And it is no brief dazzle precisely because it is something born, something intrinsic laid bare by a push from below and a pressure from planes where the Truth stands timelessly manifest. The manifestation in timeless eternity will be matched by a manifestation in eternal time, a life divine will continue without end from the day of its nativity. In this it will

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differ radically from the spiritual revelations that earth has hitherto known. Now will be an Age of the Spirit established for good because of a Power that has never before been found in its fullness and given an expressive body. Nothing will swamp the Truth, nothing will mix a shadow with the light. Once for all, God will be the inhabitant of earth.

Fourthly, there is marked in the pronouncement an imperial gesture. This is not a prayer or an invocation; neither is it a promise or a prophecy. It is a fiat. A divine decree has gone forth in it, the creative Word is uttered and sent out to become flesh. In the long history of Sri Aurobindo's Yoga, the final stage is inaugurated by this birthday-command of the Mother.

Henceforth like a hammer that breaks all resistance, crashes through the perverting Titan's brain, batters down the barriers between the blind Without and the luminous Within—henceforth the supreme Truth will beat increasingly its immortal rhythm in all terrestrial movements and be more and more the very throb of the world's heart, making that heart a radiant child of the Mother's Consciousness and responsive at every moment to Sri Aurobindo's Will.

K. D. SETHNA

"A COLONIST FROM IMMORTALITY"

The Coming of Sri Aurobindo

"Synergist"

When a prince left his throne and went and sat under a Bo tree, little did the world dream that history was being written. It was not wiser when the son of a carpenter walked from Gethsemane to Calvary. It once again gazed with unseeing eyes when on 4th April, 1910, a boat came sailing across the Bay of Bengal carrying an amazing personality—the famous political leader who had unfurled the banner of India's Independence, Aurobindo Ghose. Perhaps never before had "the moving waters at their priestlike task of pure ablution round earth's human shores" fulfilled their mission so divinely.

As the boat entered the harbour, once again the light of the Spirit touched the town of Pondicherry. The Power that shapes our destinies and is wiser than we are, always works with an unerring knowledge of ends. It took away Sri Aurobindo from his important political work and brought him to an apparently insignificant little town; but hundreds of years ago this town was a Veda-puri and the famous Rishi Agasthya lived there as its patron saint. It used to be an intellectual centre—something like our present day university towns.

Sri Aurobindo had distinctly received an *adesh*, a divine command from within, to go to Pondicherry to do the work for which really he had taken birth. In a larger vision it can be now seen that all that had transpired was more the occasion than the cause of his coming to Pondicherry. The Old Vedic image of Agasthya digging the subconscious regions with his spade bears a great resemblance, though in germ, to Sri Aurobindo and his work—the work of clearing the inconscient layers of the earth-consciousness and bringing down the Truth-light and Truth-power of the Supermind there; this being a fundamental condition for the creation of a divine life upon the earth; for it is this dark and obscure nether region of man's consciousness that keeps him tied to his lower nature and foils his attempts to rise to a higher level of being. The

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resemblance becomes all the more glaring when we see a new International University Centre coming up, and Pondicherry showing clear signs of slowly turning into a culture Centre, a meeting ground between the East and the West.

If we examine the course of man's spiritual evolution, it can be seen that Sri Aurobindo not only brings to a culminating point the work of Agasthya and the Rishis, but takes up in his Yoga the strands of all the important spiritual disciplines and integrates them through his own realisation of the Supramental Truth-consciousness. He has written; "In this Yoga, the methods of other Yogas are taken up, but with a difference in the final object"—"Veda and Vedanta are one side of the One Truth; Tantra with its emphasis on Shakti is another; in this yoga all sides of the Truth are taken up, not in the systematic forms given them formerly but in their essence, and carried to the fullest and highest significance." For example, Sri Aurobindo takes up the vast Formless, Immutable, and Impersonal Self of the Vedanta as the broad base on which to erect the superstructure of his spiritual realisations; he also takes up the Shakti worship of the Tantrics—not in its outer form but its central movement; and even then, he lays a great emphasis on the descent of the Higher Shakti into the *adhar* to transform it, not solely on the ascent of the Kundalini, which is the main pre-occupation of the Tantrics. Or again, if we see the succession of Avatars, Sri Aurobindo's carrying on of the spiritual work started by the earlier Avatars becomes quite evident. Rama destroying Ravana is a symbol—even though an historical fact—of the Divine emanating in a human form at a critical stage in man's evolution to conquer and subjugate the Rakshasa nature, the kinetic animal mind and rajasic vital ego with its raw appetites and passions, and establish the sattwic mind of the true mental being with its ethical nature. Sri Aurobindo, representing the descent of the Divine Consciousness from the plane of the highest Truth, now conquers not only this simple type of Rakshasa, but also a more powerful type—a mentalised Rakshasa, at once cunning, violent and aggressive, with a world-devouring appetite. If the Ravana of modern times, symbolised by Hitler, could have seen the play of forces that precipitated his doom, and read the signs of the times, he would have recognised another Rama pitted against him, or a new Krishna silently fighting another Kurukshetra, wrapping him up in his Yoga Maya, making him see tigers where there were goats, and armies where there were stones, and sending him wool-gathering to distant places instead of allowing him to conquer nations within his grasp. But Sri Aurobindo comes to subjugate not only the bluntly aggressive and expansive Rakshasa nature, but also the

“A COLONIST FROM IMMORTALITY”

crafty scheming Asura mind that passes off falsehoods as truths with diabolical cleverness. This type too has been brought under control in the evolutionary field. The world is now entering a new era, for, as the Mother's birthday Message indicates, the light of the Truth has been born upon the earth. From the sattwic mind to the Supermind is a very definite evolutionary step which Sri Aurobindo has been helping the human race to take through his own attainments. The opening up of the possibilities of the Overmind, a level immediately below the Supermind, was made by the Avatar Krishna. The progression is unmistakable.

The coming of Sri Aurobindo to Pondicherry was, it seems, predestined; as he was to write later: “Pondicherry is the appointed place for my Yoga-siddhi, except one part of it, that is the action.” In this connection Sri Aurobindo said something interesting to a few disciples who used to sit with him in his room after 1938. Nirodbaran has recorded it in his *Conversations*. A famous Yogi in South India, when he was about to die, prophesied that a Purna Yogi from the North would come to the South, and that he would be known by three sayings. A disciple of this Yogi found out that Sri Aurobindo had uttered these sayings in his *Mrinalinir Patra*. So he came to Sri Aurobindo and offered to bear the cost of his book *Yogic Sadhana*; that is why the name of its author is put as *Uttar Yogi*.*

Then again, in 1926, when the disciples were gathered round him for the usual evening talks, he made a very striking remark which is not generally known even in his Ashram; it was about his coming to Pondicherry, and the part the Mother had played in his Yoga. The conversation is given here as recorded by Anilbaran Roy in his *Journal*—“Sri Aurobindo: ‘Though generally a touch from the Guru is necessary, it is not indispensable. In my case there was no touch from a Guru—I got an inner touch and practised Yoga. At a certain stage, when I could not proceed any further, Lele gave me some help. When I came to Pondicherry I got from within a programme for my Sadhana. I carried it out for myself, but could not make much progress regarding the help to be given to others; then came Mira—I found with her aid the method of this help.’” The signs are quite evident—everything points to Pondicherry as the chosen place for Sri Aurobindo's work.

* Only in a certain sense can Sri Aurobindo be called the author of this book. It was actually an experiment in occult communication he had carried out for some reason.

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Soon Sri Aurobindo settled down to the task of attaining the sidhhi which would open the possibilities of a divine life to the earth race. A few disciples gathered round him; they lived with him, but knew very little of what he was actually doing, for his life was inward, and his action upon things spiritually subtle, that is, carried on behind the veil of the outer day-to-day activities. He lived in his little room, a figure utterly unfathomable. Looking back upon those years one may apply to him those lines of his epic *Savitri* :

*Apart he lived in his mind's solitude,
A demigod shaping the lives of men:
One soul's ambition lifted up the race;
A Power worked, but none knew whence it came.
The universal strengths were linked with his;
Feeling earth's smallness with their boundless breadths,
He drew the energies that transmute an age.
Immeasurable by the common look,
He made great dreams a mould for coming things
And cast his deeds like bronze to front the years.
His walk through Time outstripped the human stride.
Lonely his days and splendid like the sun's.*

Day and night Sri Aurobindo worked so that men might soon have God's light and peace, and live a life of harmony, mutuality and unity. None knew better than he the meaning of the words he was to write later in *Savitri* :

*He who would save the world must share its pain.
If he knows not grief, how shall he find grief's cure?
If far he walks above mortality's head,
How shall the mortal reach that too high path?
If one of theirs they see scale heaven's peaks,
Men then can hope to learn that titan climb.
God must be born on earth and be as man
That man being human may grow even as God.*

Although his disciples had gauged his Yogic stature, they had not quite realised the divine greatness of his being. It was when the Mother came and recognised behind the human form the real Personality and Consciousness, that all knew that their unassuming Guru whom they lovingly called AG was a denizen of another sphere—"a colonist from immortality". The words written

"A COLONIST FROM IMMORTALITY"

by the Mother in her diary on March 30, 1914, are significant—"He whom we saw yesterday is on earth: His presence is enough to prove that a day will come when darkness shall be transformed into light, when Thy reign indeed established upon earth."

In 1926, Sri Aurobindo brought down the complete Overmind consciousness into himself, thereby making the next step of establishing the Supermind easier. In his own consciousness, on the summits of his being, he had already realised the Supermind, but the problem of bringing it down and fixing it in the earth-consciousness as an operative power—his own self acting as the centre for this action—still remained. Immediately after establishing the Overmind, he started his Ashram, and asked the Mother to take its charge. He then went into seclusion for intensive spiritual work, making it quite clear to his disciples that the Consciousness and the Power the Mother represented was the same as the one he stood for and that what came to them from her came from him too because he supported by his spiritual Force all that she did. They became like two sides of the same Divine Consciousness, the one silently supporting from behind the outgoing action of the other. The Mother's own statement explains this spiritual poise extremely well: "Without me he cannot manifest, without him there is no existence of mine." And Sri Aurobindo himself has written to a disciple: "For the work to be done both had to come—it could not be done otherwise."

Even from this "seclusion" Sri Aurobindo exerted his spiritual force upon world events from time to time, giving a push here, a check there, always working to establish conditions that would enable him to manifest the Supermind. During the last war he put his force and will against Hitler, for he saw behind him dark forces whose victory would have given a set-back to the evolution of the race, especially its spiritual evolution. He also put his force against Japan. These things may seem bewildering to the ordinary human mind which always takes its stand upon the data of the senses; but the existence of subtle forces is known to all those who have sufficiently advanced in Yoga. Sri Aurobindo writes in a letter to a disciple: "What I said was that behind visible events in the world there is always a mass of invisible forces at work unknown to the outward minds of men and by Yoga, (by going inward and establishing a conscious connection with the Cosmic Self and Force and forces) one can become conscious of these forces, intervene consciously in the play, to some extent at least determine things in the result of the play" This he wrote regarding the power

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of Yogic force in general. In his own case the action was even more intensive as well as wider in its scope, because he not only went inward, but was also in contact with the Supramental Power above, which he was drawing down through the Overmind to control things.

During this period, 1926 to 1950, the Ashram grew into quite a big spiritual Centre, representing humanity not only through its individual types, but also through its different vocations. Darshan after Darshan passed at an even tempo for years; suddenly in 1950 Sri Aurobindo seems to have decided to change his mode of action and force the issue regarding the fixing of the Supermind in the earth-consciousness, which was proving to be most unreceptive and intractable. A heavy price had to be paid for it, and Sri Aurobindo paid it by sacrificing his body. All this time he was trying to create sufficiently stable and receptive conditions upon the earth in order to establish the Supermind. Now, it appears, he decided to bring down a nucleus of the Supermind itself into the material world, create an intermediate layer of the "Mind of Light," and then act through them. Just before his withdrawal he drew down the Supermind into himself with a tremendous concentration, pressing it down into his material consciousness and ramming it tight till the very cells of the body began to hold it. The linkage between Matter and the Supermind was at last made. This was the reason why in spite of his withdrawal from the body the latter retained its condition and did not allow any decomposition to set in for more than a hundred hours. While looking at his *Samadhi*, his words in *Savitri* come to one's mind:

*Even if the struggling world is left outside
One man's perfection still can save the world.
There is won a new proximity to the skies,
A first betrothal of the Earth to Heaven,
A deep concordat between Truth and Life:
A camp of God is pitched in human time.*

His withdrawing from the body, though it seemed sudden to all, was decided upon by him for reasons best known to himself, months ago, perhaps more than a year back. The Mother said: "He had been thinking about it for a long time."

She now carries on the work alone—alone only in the most material sense, for she is one with him in consciousness; rather, not only in consciousness, but

"A COLONIST FROM IMMORTALITY"

also in being. Her identification with him is so close that it often seems as if Sri Aurobindo once again walks upon the earth in a human body, in the body of his associate. The Mother told the present writer: "This is the greatest victory—to feel his physical Presence like this even without the body". And this will continue till conditions are ready for his second coming—in a supramental body. His Message to the Mother on 8th December, 1950: "I shall manifest again in a supramental body built in the supramental way," is as positive as anything he has said before.

A field is being prepared for this great manifestation, a base is being made on which this supramental being can as it were stand. The earth consciousness as it is constituted will not be able to bear the spiritually magnetic field around this being and the pressure of forces it will create. The Mother is preparing the necessary conditions by consolidating the descents of the Supermind that are taking place, as well as by her own transformation.

When everything is ready, once again a boat will suddenly appear on the horizon where the Timeless leans down to Time; once again the Avatar of the Supermind will come to Pondicherry, this time on the waters of the Infinite Consciousness, clad in his raiment of gold and blue light, and say:

"THE HOUR COMETH, AND NOW IS."*

*These words were spoken by Sri Aurobindo in a powerful experience one of his disciples had soon after his withdrawal.

THE STEPS OF THE SOUL

The Mother's Talk on 12-11-52

The human individual is a very complex being: he is composed of innumerable elements, each one of which is an independent entity and has almost a personality. Not only so, the most contradictory elements are housed together. If there is a particular quality or capacity present, the very opposite of it, annulling it, as it were, will be also found along with it and embracing it. I have seen a man brave, courageous, heroic to the extreme, flinching from no danger, facing unperturbed the utmost peril, the bravest of the brave, truly; and yet I have seen the same man cowering in abject terror, like the last of poltroons, in the presence of certain circumstances. I have seen a most generous man, giving away largely, freely, not counting any expenditure or sacrifice, without the least care or reservation; the same person I have also found to be the vilest of misers in respect of certain other considerations. I have seen again the most intelligent person, with a clear mind, full of light and understanding, easily comprehending the logic and implication of a topic and yet I have seen him betraying the utmost stupidity of which even an ordinary man without education or intelligence would be incapable. These are not theoretical examples, but I have come across such persons actually in life.

The complexity arises not only in extension, but also in depth. Man does not live on a single plane but on many planes at the same time. There is a scale of gradation in human consciousness: the higher one rises in the scale the greater the number of elements or personalities that one possesses. Whether one lives mostly or mainly on the physical or vital or mental plane or on any particular section of these planes or on planes above and beyond, there will be accordingly differences in the constitution or psycho-physical make-up of the individual personality. The higher one stands the richer the personality, because it lives not only on its own normal level, but also on all that are below and which it has transcended. The complete or integral man, some occultists say, possesses 365 personalities; indeed it may be much more (The Vedas speak of the three and thirty-three and thirty-three hundred and

THE STEPS OF THE SOUL

thirty-three thousand gods that may be housed in the human vehicle—the basic three being evidently the triple status or world of Body, Life and Mind).

What is the meaning of this self-contradiction, this division in man? To understand that, we must know and remember that each person represents a certain quality or capacity, a particular achievement to be embodied. How best can it be done? What is the way by which one can acquire a quality at its purest, highest and most perfect? It is by setting an opposition to it. That is how a power is increased and strengthened—by fighting against and overcoming all that weakens and contradicts it. The deficiencies in respect of a particular quality show you where you are to mend and reinforce and in what way to improve in order to make it perfectly perfect. It is the hammer that beats the weak and soft iron to transform it into hard steel. The preliminary discord is useful and necessary to be utilised for a higher harmony. This is the secret of self-conflict in man. You are weakest precisely in that element which is destined to be your greatest asset.

Each man has then a mission to fulfil, a role to play in the universe; a part he has been given to learn and take up in the cosmic Purpose which he alone is capable of executing and none other. This he has to learn and acquire through life-experiences, that is to say, not in one life, but in life after life. In fact, that is the meaning of the chain of lives that the individual has to pass through, namely, to acquire experiences and to gather out of them the thread—the skein of qualities and attributes, powers and capacities—for the pattern of life he has to weave. Now, the inmost being, the true personality, the central consciousness of the evolving individual is his psychic being. It is, as it were, a very tiny speck of light lying far behind the life experiences in normal people. In grown-up souls this psychic consciousness has an increased light—increased in intensity, volume and richness. Thus there are souls, old and new. Old and ancient are those that have reached or about to reach the fullness of perfection; they have passed through a long past of innumerable lives and developed the most complex and yet the most integrated personality. New souls are those that are just emerged or emerging out of the mere physico-vital existence; these are like simple organisms, made of fewer constituents, referring mostly to the bodily life, with just a modicum of the mental. It is the soul, however, that grows with experiences and it is the soul that builds and enriches the personality. Whatever portion of the outer life, whatever element in the mind or vital or body succeeds in coming in contact with the psychic consciousness, that is to say, is able to come

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under its influence, is taken up and lodged there: it remains in the psychic being as its living memory and permanent possession. It is such elements that form the basis, the ground-work upon which the structure of the integral and true personality is raised.

The first thing then to do is to find out what it is that you are meant to realise, what is the role you have to play, your particular mission and the capacity or quality you have to express. You have to discover that and also the thing or things that oppose and do not allow it to flower or come to full manifestation. In other words, you have to know yourself, recognize your soul or psychic being.

For that you must be absolutely sincere and impartial. You must observe yourself as if you were observing and criticising a third person. You must not start with an idea that this is your life's mission, such is your particular capacity, you are to do this or you are to do that, in this lies your talent or genius etc. That will carry you away from the right track. It is not the liking or disliking of your external being, your mental or vital or physical choice that determines the true line of your growth. Nor should you take up the opposite attitude and say, "I am good for nothing in this matter, I am useless in that other, this is not for me". Neither vanity or arrogance nor self-depreciation or false modesty should move you. As I said, you must be absolutely impartial and unconcerned. You should be like a mirror that reflects the truth and does not judge.

If you are able to keep such an attitude, if you have this repose and quiet trust in your being and wait for what may be revealed to you, then something like this happens: you are, as it were, in the woods, dark and noiseless; you see in front of you just a sheet of water dark and still, hardly visible - a bit of a pond imbedded in the obscurity; and slowly upon it a moonbeam is cast and in the cool dim light emerges the calm liquid surface. That is how your secret truth of being will appear and present itself to you at your first contact with it: there you will see gradually reflected the true qualities of your being, the traits of your divine personality, what you really are and what you are meant to be.

One who has thus known oneself and possessed oneself conquering all opposition within himself, has by that very fact extended himself and his conquest, making it easier for others to make the same or similar conquest. These are the pioneers or the elite who by their victorious campaign within themselves help others towards their victory.

IN THE MOTHER'S PRESENCE

I

Towards Her Balcony

Oh to walk silently through your hushed streets!
Downward bent are the lids of my eyes—
Curtains guarding the new-found wonder
Of your Glance, where my incensed rapture lies.

Your sweet Smile rends my heart in two!
And the tears that wash my eyes anon
Come surging through some ancient source
And lo! cool rain prevails and drought has flown.

Oh wondrous Height of all miracles!
Why don't my feet burn on the sun-scorched stones?
Instead, their fire is sweetness to my blood—
And my utter trance-stillness real Life to my bones.

II

Evening Concentration

Your tiny dainty Feet have just to tread in our midst,
Your beautiful poised Head has just to turn around,
Little Lady of our profoundest heart—
Queen of Silent Prayer and the Soul's Secret Sound!

Though hundreds of us imperfect beings gather,
Though you be tinier than most of all,
In that wide courtyard the essence of your Being
Rises like vast echoes of a waterfall.

You are silent but your music fills every waiting mind,
Your Pressure is a seal of peace on every heart—
Sweet Mother, of your Divinity and compassionate Love,
Of your vast Consciousness make us even a tiny part!

MINNIE

PAGES FROM A JOURNAL
THE EARLY CONVERSATIONS OF SRI AUROBINDO
Compiled from the Notes of Anilbaran Roy

COMPILER'S NOTE

Before Sri Aurobindo went into seclusion in order to carry on a yogic-spiritual action by which he could prepare conditions in earth-life suitable for establishing the Supermind, he used to have long conversations with his disciples. Exact verbatim reports of these were not taken down, but some of the disciples used to keep notes. Anilbaran Roy was in the habit of writing down after the conversations were over most of the things that had been discussed.

It is true that Sri Aurobindo later changed his views on some matters to a certain extent, not so much in their fundamental truth as in their application to life amidst the fast-changing conditions of the world; also as his mastery over the world forces increased he was led to alter some of his views with regard to the working of the Higher Power in the earth-consciousness. Nevertheless, the fundamental truths he had previously expressed he did not reject but incorporated them in a larger and more complex unity.

At some places the notes taken down may not capture the correct tone of Sri Aurobindo's exposition and bring out the precise shade of meaning, or again they may fail to catch the right turn of phrase and the immaculateness of the expression, making the philosophical formulation suffer stylistically to some extent, but on the whole the journal does justice to the informal discourses Sri Aurobindo used to give to his disciples before he went into seclusion, and definitely succeeds in recreating the atmosphere of that period—an atmosphere of erudition and spiritual enlightenment, of friendship and good humour, of love and goodwill, an atmosphere that can only be possible among men who live together in brotherhood for the pursuit of a high spiritual ideal and look up to their God-realised leader to give them light and realisation.

"Synergist"

GURU AND DISCIPLE

In this issue two talks on the relation between a Guru and his disciples are given. They are of special interest as they deal with things Sri Aurobindo has not discussed in any of his written works.

One day the talk turned on Ramkrishna giving the higher consciousness to a disciple by his touch. Sri Aurobindo remarked, "There is no use forcing things. Ramkrishna gave the Brahman consciousness to Hriday but it did him no good and he had to take that back."

When Sri Aurobindo said this someone referred to a certain Yogi giving a premature touch to a disciple.

Sri Aurobindo replied, "He was never effective as a Guru—he was too intellectual for that."

"But he made X his disciple."

"He acted upon X's mind; but a Guru must act upon something more than the mind..... When a Yogi takes disciples it involves a great exhaustion of his powers. It is for this that one should take disciples only after *Purna Siddhi*. The disciples create obstacles in the Guru's own course of sadhana, and he has to overcome these obstacles."

"But do not the disciples help the Guru in some respects?"

"Disciples are not helpers," Sri Aurobindo replied. "Only he is a helper from whom the Yogi can get something which he has not got. In a way the disciples do help—that is by creating obstacles, which provide exercise for the powers of the Guru."

"But that is a negative help. Isn't there any positive help?"

"Yes, there is positive help too. In our Yoga, when there is true aspiration in a disciple it is a great help. We are all trying to bring down the Supramental Power, and this creates a surface. When the disciple is very receptive, the Guru does not have to spend much of his force; it is then a natural outflow from him—a part of his own movement; otherwise, he has to exert a special force on the disciple and that involves much expenditure of energy on his part."

After a week the same subject again came up for discussion. This time Sri Aurobindo was asked, "In sadhana what should be the ideal relation of a disciple to his Guru?"

PAGES FROM A JOURNAL

He replied, "This the disciple must determine himself—no general standard can be fixed for all. It is only the mind which seeks such ideals and standards—it will deduce rules and make the whole thing artificial."

Then Anilbaran asked, "Of all the disciples of Ramkrishna, Vivekananda derived the greatest benefit; was this due to the greatness of his *adhara* or the fullness of his surrender?"

"What do you mean by greatest benefit? Of all the disciples Vivekananda was certainly the most powerful, and he was great in action. But how can we judge the amount of spiritual benefit which the other disciples received? As regards capacity and surrender, surrender is part of the capacity of the disciple."

Now another sadhak joined the discussion. He asked, "Has the Guru preference for particular disciples?"

"What the Guru gives is something impersonal, and there is no such preference in the Divine Power. The human personality of the Guru makes mistakes, no doubt, but it represents something higher than itself. Sometimes the Guru may have some vital and mental preference, but what he gives is not determined by that. Of course, when ordinary human beings become Gurus it is quite possible that they may have preferences."

"Cannot there be *ahaituki kripa*?"

"What do you mean by *ahaituki kripa*? The Divine Power does not do anything in caprice or arbitrarily—there is reason for everything it does, but it does not act according to the rules of the human mind."

"What does the Divine Grace signify?"

"It means that if one has defects, yet if there is the right aspiration in him, the higher Power will descend. The Divine Power can overcome adverse circumstances and apparent improbabilities. Thus, there is this truth in the Divine Grace, that it supplies an infinite basis for faith. If one can fulfil certain conditions and open oneself to the higher Power, then in spite of defects and difficulties the Power will descend."

"Does not the Power itself help us to fulfil the conditions?"

"Yes, otherwise it will not be possible to fulfil them."

"Then everything ultimately depends upon the Grace of God."

"That is from a very high standpoint. In our present circumstances we have to see the arrangement of forces and accept the conditions—man has a part to play."

MY CORRESPONDENCE WITH SRI AUROBINDO

Nirodbaran

SRI AUROBINDO'S FORCE

Continued from previous issue

14-2-35

Myself: It seems that before I could come out of the pit of 'latency', the Avatar pyramid has fallen on my head, sending me down to the bottom again. But, I am afraid, you are making me admit something I never wrote nor implied in what I wrote. However, I shall consult your *Essays on the Gita* to see what you say about the Avatar.

Sri Aurobindo: Can you not understand that it was the natural logical result of the statements made on either side about the unbridgeable distance between 'Man Divine' and the human being moving in the darkness towards the Divine? If you admit the utility of my sadhana the controversy ceases. But so long as you declare that what I have done in my sadhana has no connection with what can be done, I shall go on beating you. (What the Avatar says in the 'Essays' is only an explanation of the Gita; it is not the full statement of the issue.) But still if you read three or four chapters there you will get some idea of the general principles. For the rest I propose that all discussion be postponed till after the 21st (not immediately after). This will give time for you to clear your ideas and for me to pursue my 'Avataric' sadhana (not for myself, but for this confounded and too confounded earth race).

15-2-35

Myself: I accept your proposal of postponement and send this last letter, which incidentally brings to an end the topic of latency and omnipotence. We shall all be anxiously waiting to hear what you have gained in two weeks for 'this confounded earth race' for which you always seem to have such great love. (Please don't forget this always confounded little earth creature.)

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MY CORRESPONDENCE WITH SRI AUROBINDO

Now, I would like to mention one thing more. Sometimes I think that the Avatar's work,—Buddha's sadhana, Christ's preaching regarding the Kingdom of Heaven etc.—were not so unselfish. I don't mean that they did anything for personal greatness; nevertheless, isn't it a kind of selfishness—let us say of the noblest kind?

Sri Aurobindo did not agree with this, and made the following marginal comment: "No objection—if to do things for the Divine in the world rather than for individual gain is a high selfishness, that is all right. Only selfishness usually means doing something for one's sole profit.

Myself: (considerably subdued after the philosophical beating I had received): I understand and accept what you say about omnipotence, the conditions of the game that have to be observed, latency etc. This letter is not to dispute any of the things you have stated but just to express that I am boiling inside with impotent rage to see how you have "unfairly" cornered me with the very arguments I was maintaining all the while. Alas! my pen derives its power only from terrestrial planes!

Sri Aurobindo: You were the reporter of the discussion; so naturally you had to be the whipping boy for all sides. You can't complain of that. There must be somebody to tilt at—otherwise how the deuce is the argument to be done?

Myself: I have, however, jotted down a few points for you to see.

Point No. 1. I never said that only moral capacities can be latent, and not mental.

Sri Aurobindo: No, but it was implied in the argument to which you gave voice. It may not have been your argument, but what does it matter?

Myself (continuing): Point No. 2. I did not say that poetry or music, or any art not evident, cannot be manifested. I distinctly used the word *latent*, and not evident.

Sri Aurobindo: Evident is the opposite of latent; so "not evident" or "evidently not there" as you put it is equal to "latent"—my use of the word is therefore perfectly apposite.

Myself: Our point was that *faculties* not yet evident may be made evident because they may be unmanifest, latent, in some inner region of the being. Just as in Shunyam everything exists, so also in man—whatever comes out of him. (The whole discussion collapses if we deny that the unevident can be made evident.)

Sri Aurobindo's comment on the first part of the sentence was: "How can they be evident when they are latent? 'Latent' means 'hidden', therefore not evident.—When you say that a capacity is not there, you mean only that to all evidence it is not there; there is no evidence of its being there to the observer; ergo, the observer concludes that it is not there. All that you can really say is that it *appears* to be non-existent. You cannot say with certitude more than that.

"You said 'people who evidently had no music in them'—that can only mean people in whom music is not evident—for none can say whether it is or is not there latent."

Regarding the second part of my statement, where I spoke about the discussion collapsing, he wrote: "It does so also if you admit that the unevident can be made evident."

Myself: By latency we mean what is not evident, that is, not on the surface, but somewhere behind or below. If it is in the surface mind, it is no longer latent, because one can say with some certitude that such faculties exist, though not quite developed yet—that is, neither latent nor fully evident.

Sri Aurobindo: Evidently not there on the surface, but how can you say that it is evidently not there below?

Myself: You say, if I understand you right, that since the inner being is open to the universal, anything can manifest through it even if it is not there latent; you further add that it is impossible to say what will or will not manifest once the universal acts upon it. But is it impossible to say for Yogis? For example, can't you say whether a man has a capacity for Yoga or for something else? Do you simply gamble when you accept someone?

Sri Aurobindo: I have never said anything about how I choose people. I was answering the argument that what has not been or is not in manifestation, cannot be. That was very clearly the point in the discussion,—that the Divine

MY CORRESPONDENCE WITH SRI AUROBINDO

cannot manifest what is not yet there—even he is impotent to do that. He can only manifest what is either already manifest or else latent in the field (person) he is working in. I say no—he can bring in new things. He can bring it in from the universal or he can bring it down from the transcendent. For in the Divine cosmic and transcendent all things are. Whether he will do so or not in a particular case is quite another matter. My argument was directed towards dissipating this “can’t, can’t” with which people try to stop all possibility of progress.

Myself: You have raised another new point about the universal. Let it go to the—; for the present at least.

Sri Aurobindo: These are not new points; they are as old as the hills.

Myself: “You can cut me, Sir, or beat me, but don’t forsake me”. (In imitation of the librarian of my College who came out with a similar appeal when the professor of English caught him smoking one day.

Sri Aurobindo: Never! But beat—a lot.

Myself: I repeat—a little pathetically—that my brain is sclerotic and psychic smoky; no intellect and no yogic capacity, as you yourself must have realised by now.

Sri Aurobindo: Well, to see that they are non-evident shows you at once that they are latent and will be evident and even if they are not latent they are waiting for you in the universal. So in every blessed way you are very quite all right. Be consoled therefore.

Myself: Rather a long letter, because a closing one. O, when will these two weeks be over? Give me some extra force for something else, just to keep me out of mischief—an idle brain is the devil’s workshop. Who knows what I’ll be up to!

Sri Aurobindo: Man, don’t talk lightly like that of the devil. He is too active to be trifled with in that way.

CORRESPONDENCE WITH THE MOTHER

COMPILER'S NOTE

Sri Aurobindo's correspondence with the sadhaks, spread over a period of about eight years, has by now become almost as famous as his larger works. But very few people know that whilst he was writing letters in reply to the queries of the disciples, the Mother, who has always stood side by side with him in all his work, was also carrying on a correspondence of the same nature. It was arranged at the time that whilst some of the sadhaks daily sent their note-books to Sri Aurobindo for his comments, the others were to send them to the Mother. This correspondence is now released here in a systematic form, and should prove of interest to our readers.

“Synergist”

Sadhak: How can one know if the observation of a particular movement is true or not?

Mother: It is necessary to attain to the highest knowledge if one hopes never to make a mistake. Everyone of you will have to work hard to do this.

Sadhak: X is a good boy. He has some very fine qualities; but there is one bad thing in him—it is vanity.

Mother: He is very young—it is a thing that passes as one grows older. Have you no vanity in you at all that you reproach him with it?

Sadhak: Someone said to me: “Mocking is not really bad; if you do not mock, then you are like a tree without its sap.” Is there some truth in this?

Mother: No, it is not true. To mock at others is not at all a sign of intellectual superiority, but of an ignorant mental arrogance. *The Psychic never mocks.*

CORRESPONDENCE WITH THE MOTHER

Sadhak: I told someone: "You should see not the bad side of persons but always their good side." He replied: "No, one must see both and distinguish them."

Mother: It is certainly very bad to talk about the defects of others; everyone has his faults and to dwell on them constantly in one's thoughts certainly does not help to cure them.

Sadhak: A. told me the other day that if I had no time to read newspapers, I should at least glance through them. I replied: "Is there some rule that one must read newspapers?" He then said: "You must know what is going on in the world. You are not a Sannyasi!"

Mother: I am not a Sannyasi and I never read a newspaper! I have no time to do so. It is difficult to read the newspapers without the consciousness descending to a quite ordinary level. It is only when the consciousness is firmly established in union with the Divine that one can read newspapers without any danger of falling into an inferior consciousness.

Sadhak: After describing a dream I had I wrote: "I haven't described it exactly as I saw it, because it is difficult to describe it. The description is nearly accurate."

Mother: I would advise you to be very careful and scrupulous to say only what is absolutely exact. It is very easy to invent things while relating a dream, and then it is of no value whatever.

Sadhak: What is the significance of this image: "A young girl with her hand on the back of a lion"?

Mother: The lion is the symbol of power. Rather it may be said that under the control of the divine Will the power is beneficent, but without this control it is harmful to all and becomes a dreadful thing.

Sadhak: I had faith in my force and believed that I was capable of doing all the work I had, but yesterday X told me that it was not necessary to do too much work, so I got troubled and did not know what to do. I am therefore writing to you. *

* This question and the accompanying two, marked with asterisks, are in the same letter. The words in italics in this series are underlined by the Mother. (Compiler)

MOTHER INDIA

Mother: It is not in *your* force that you must have faith, but in the divine Force which acts in all those who are consecrated to the Divine and sustains them in their work.

Sadhak: I have faith that *I am capable* of doing all the work. I like very much to do work and not waste time in taking rest. Isn't sleeping at night sufficient? *

Mother: Once again I say that to have *faith in yourself* cannot carry you very far and with surety; sooner or later you will have a reaction and be obliged to stop.

Sadhak: If you will allow me, I would like to continue the work.*

Mother: Establish first the right attitude of finding your point d'appui, your support and help in *the Divine alone*, and all possibility of fatigue will disappear. Till then, it is better to let the servant do at least a part of the work, which you may supervise if you like.

Sadhak: After finishing a certain work I felt very tired. As it seemed to me that this would stop me from doing any other work, I put myself on guard. I said to myself: "No, no. You must work. Have faith, everything will be alright." When I finished the second work the fatigue disappeared. In the evening I had a severe pain in the stomach, and this also seemed to come just to hamper my work. Then I said: "No, you must work: it is only by work or else by faith that the pain will go, but if you take rest now the pain will increase." I said to the pain: "You must flee from me, there is no place for you here." Just as I expected, the pain disappeared after dinner.

Mother: The faith is in your active consciousness and your will, but it is still not there in your body; that is why your body feels tired and suffers. It is necessary to give it rest. Until you know how to organise your work and control the useless to-and-fro movements, it will be better to give up the cleaning work and let it be done by a servant, or else if you hold on to the cleaning you should find someone to attend to your garden.

Sadhak: I regret what I wrote yesterday.

Mother: You should not regret it. It is always better to be frank and open; it is the best way to correct oneself.

PROBLEMS OF INTEGRAL YOGA

The Unpublished Correspondence of Sri Aurobindo

COMPILER'S NOTE

Many letters of Sri Aurobindo have already been published expressing his views on almost all matters concerning human existence and explaining the process of his Integral Yoga—the Yoga of Supramental Transformation. They have been presented in the form of a philosophical and psychological statement of his leading ideas, experience-concepts and spiritually realised truths, and consequently occupy an important place in the scheme of Aurobindonian literature. The object of this Series, however, is different—it is to present problems of Integral Yoga exactly as they were put before Sri Aurobindo by the disciples from time to time, together with Sri Aurobindo's comments on them. It is felt that a compilation of this type will be a really living document of his teaching and will help the reader to come to close grips with problems of this particular Yoga.

Often, the questions asked by the disciples will not be given when the nature of the problem discussed is easily understandable from Sri Aurobindo's reply; secondly, the letters published will not always be in answer to particular problems—they may either be important injunctions given to the disciples or of a purely informative nature. Sometimes, letters already printed in the various journals and books of the Ashram may also be included if they form an important connecting link in the sequence of questions and answers.

"Synergist"

SECTION II: MISCELLANEOUS LETTERS

Two entirely different types of letters are selected this time for publication the first, dealing with the clarification of terms used in this Yoga, and the second with the transformation of the physical and the subconscious.

(A) CLARIFICATION OF TERMS

Faith, Confidence and Trust in the Divine

Sadhak: What is exactly the meaning of Faith in the Divine, Confidence in the Divine, and Trust in the Divine?

MOTHER INDIA

Sri Aurobindo: Faith is a general word—*Sraddha*—The soul's belief in the Divine's existence, wisdom, power, love and grace—confidence and trust are aspects of Faith and results of it.

Confidence is a feeling of sureness that the Divine will hear when sincerely called and help and that all the Divine does is for the best.

Trust is the mind's and heart's complete reliance on the Divine and its guidance and protection. (1-7-35)

Sadhak: What is the difference between Happiness, Joy and Delight?

Sri Aurobindo: Happiness is a condition of gladness, sense of inner ease and welfare, contentment, sunlit life—it is more quiet in its nature than joy and delight.

Joy (*harsha*) is more intense. It is a strong movement of great gladness with an exultation; a leaping up of the vital to take some happiness, good fortune or other thing pleasant to the being.

Delight is an intense joy or an intense pleasure in some thing or an intensely joyful condition. At its most intense it becomes what is called rapture or ecstasy when one is "carried away" or "lifted out of" oneself by the intensity of the delight. (24-6-35)

Sadhak: What is the difference between Quietness and Calmness?

Sri Aurobindo: Quietness is when the mind or vital is not troubled, restless, drawn about by or crowded with thoughts and feelings. Especially when either is detached and looks at these as a surface movement, we say that the mind or vital is quiet.

Calmness is a more positive condition, not merely an absence of restlessness, over-activity or trouble. When there is a clear or great or strong tranquillity which nothing troubles or can trouble, then we say that calm is established. (29-6-35)

(B) THE TRANSFORMATION OF THE PHYSICAL AND THE SUBCONSCIENT

It is long since your psychic being awoke and recognised the Mother and the mental and vital followed. A certain difficulty began only when the physical consciousness had to be awakened wholly and that is the source of the difficulties

PROBLEMS OF INTEGRAL YOGA

you have been having from time to time; but the change of the physical is difficult for all and here also you have been making progress. Do not identify yourself with the small part of the exterior physical nature that has still to be enlightened or allow yourself to feel as if that was all of you—for it is only that part that can say it has not yet recognised the Mother. See it for what it is, only a small external part which has to be brought into line with the rest. It is the psychic being that has throughout felt that the Mother was yours and you were the Mother's and that was a true feeling.

I want you not to accept depression or an exaggerated feeling of unworthiness, for that does not give strength to go forward. To see clearly both what has been done and what has still to be done and go on with faith and courage is the right attitude. (27-3-46)

I have said that if one has the principle of surrender and union in the mind and heart there is no difficulty in extending it to the obscurer parts of the physical and the subconscious. As you have this central surrender and union, you can easily complete it everywhere. A quiet aspiration for complete consciousness is all that is needed. Then the material and subconscious will become penetrated by the light like the rest and there will come in a quietude, wideness, harmony free from all reactions that will be the basis of the final change. (17-3-36)

If light, strength, the Mother's consciousness is brought down into the body it can penetrate the subconscious also and convert its obscurity and resistance.

When something is thrown out both from the subconscious and the environmental nature, then it is finished and can return no more. (14-4-36)

It is very good that all should have gone like that and the true consciousness affirmed its control in the physical. These things are indeed attacks intended to prevent the control being established in the physical being as it was in the inner parts. Wherever the physical consciousness opens, the Force can sweep out all that could trouble. Sometimes it takes a little time to overcome the resistance, but finally all disappears before it. (11-10-36)

THE SADHANA OF SRI AUROBINDO'S YOGA

COMPILER'S NOTE

In recent years Sri Aurobindo's teaching and his Ashram at Pondicherry have attracted a great deal of attention. People from India as well as abroad who visit this spiritual centre are greatly impressed by its numerous activities and by the perfect organisation of the collective life of its seven hundred and fifty residents. Nevertheless, many of them, though they appreciate the outer side of the Ashram life, find it difficult to understand in what way exactly the actual sadhana of the Integral Yoga is done; in the absence of a set form of discipline which they can see being followed by all alike, they are unable to have a clear grasp of the inner yogic life of the sadhaks and their spiritual development.

It is therefore felt that an account of typical day-to-day sadhana of different disciples written by themselves and published in the form of a diary will greatly help people to have an insight into the working of the inner life of the Ashram.

The account published below is entitled: *My Sadhana with the Mother*. This account is all the more interesting and valuable because under each statement there is Sri Aurobindo's comment—often brief, but always illuminating. As the reader will go through it, he will understand, apart from other things, the extremely important part played by the Mother in Sri Aurobindo's Yoga of Transformation, and how she and Sri Aurobindo have established a spiritual poise by which they act together on the sadhaks. He will also begin to realise how this Yoga cannot be done and followed to its logical consummation by one's own efforts, but only through the Mother.

"Synergist"

THE SADHANA OF SRI AUROBINDO'S YOGA

MY SADHANA WITH THE MOTHER

By "AB"

THE SUBCONSCIENT DIFFICULTY

28-4-35

AB. It is often noticed that in trying to solve the difficulties of others or in pointing out their defects we disturb the Mother's working on them. For unless it is done by the Mother's Will acting through us, there is always a chance of our vital ego getting in.

Sri Aurobindo. One has to see, but not judge (i. e. not condemn, simply observe). Each is driven by his nature, so long as he does not consent to change masters and be driven by the Divine.

AB. It is not always our surface-consciousness that resists a complete surrender to the Divine. The general nature has also a hand in it. It tries to influence us by saying: "You see, an entire offering of yourself cannot be done so soon, so easily. Better wait for some time more and let the external being be ready first." But, if we wait for the external being to be ready first, I am afraid we shall have to wait all our life! For, how could the ignorant and rigidly obstinate outer self be prepared unless the inner pushes it!

Sri Aurobindo. It is never too early to make the complete surrender. Some things may need to wait, but not that.

AB. After getting up from sleep I find it very difficult to make my way upward till 9-30 A. M. This is a daily occurrence; no amount of concentration makes any difference. To stay thus in the darkness (the inertia means here a denial of the Divine) for four and a half hours at a stretch is rather a heavy burden for me.

Sri Aurobindo. It is one of the fixed habits of the subconscious which do not yield easily to pressure. — One day it will go.

AB. I suppose all the inertia and fatigue I get after getting up from sleep is due to the subconscious very actively coming to the front.

Sri Aurobindo. It is due to the consciousness going down deep into the subconscious inertia in sleep.

30-4-35

AB. Since yesterday evening there has been a powerful uprising of the subconscious inertia. So long as it lasts I have no respite.

Sri Aurobindo. The subconscious difficulty is the* difficulty now — because the whole struggle in the general sadhana is now there. It is in the subconscious, no longer in the vital or conscious physical that the resistance is all massed together.

AB. Till yesterday, in spite of the inertia one part was keeping itself not only aloof but soaring higher and higher. Today the pressure of the inertia is so heavy that it has covered up almost all my active parts which could have driven it out.

I am unable to make out what you wish me to do since all my efforts seem to bear no fruit, at least at present.

* * *

At this moment, all of a sudden the "Psychic" Mother tearing the inner veil came out and stood before me. She then spoke in a calm and clear voice through the usual medium of knowledge. Her appearance brought an extraordinary kind of power and light in the knowledge.

"My child, have patience; don't lose your faith in me. You know that the subconscious is the most obscure, ignorant, and obstinate part. So it is natural that when it is taken up for purification it will need a long time and resist vehemently. How can a darkest part accept a purest light at once?"

"You wrote; 'All my efforts seem to bear no fruit...' How do you know that they have not borne any fruit? Because your physical mind does not see? In the spiritual path results become visible to your mind after a long time. Moreover, the right attitude would be not to worry much about any fruits or results but to go on and on with a persistent and steady aspiration, rejection and surrender." (At this point Sri Aurobindo wrote in between the lines; "There must always be something in you that is detached from the rest that is submerged by the difficulty — the Witness who looks but is not involved.")

The "Psychic" Mother Continued: "You may ask, 'How am I to keep such a persistent and steady attitude when my condition is such that my whole being is veiled?'"

*Sri Aurobindo underlined this word.—"AB".

THE SADHANA OF SRI AUROBINDO'S YOGA

"There are two ways of doing this. In the first, one feels: As all my conscious parts are veiled it is impossible for me to resist. It is the Divine itself that must come and change what is necessary. Unless it comes I shall have to remain in this inert state. (By the way, remember one thing—when people feel that the *tamas* has possessed all their being, it is *very difficult* for the Divine to help them. For how can its aid enter into them when they themselves are all closed? Unless one opens the doors oneself the Divine is obliged to stay outside.) —This is what is called a passive surrender, a hopeless resistance in which one allows oneself to be a prey of the lower forces.

"This attitude I don't like, in which one expects everything from me without helping me by his efforts, which are indispensable.

"In the second way, as soon as a sadhak finds that the inertia has covered up his conscious parts, he at once becomes furious — not with himself but with the inertia, and that too without getting upset or angry. He becomes furious in order to arouse his dormant or veiled vital, and says to me, 'What, inertia in me! It is impossible.' And then he attacks the inertia instead of being attacked by it, as an army attacks the enemy.

"This attitude, though to most it may seem impossible to keep, will, if carried out vigilantly, boldly, and frankly with unflinching efforts, bear fruit immediately, and the sadhak will find himself a little more advanced on his journey.

"You cannot expect your boat to sail swiftly unless this attitude is there with you all along.....

"Some lazy people may murmur, 'The second method can be used only if the inertia has kept out some parts from its darkness.' But what of those who were all enveloped by it and yet sent me the news—'We fought out completely the most violent attacks of inertia within five minutes'?

"It is only when one thinks that one cannot resist that one's power of resistance fades away. Each one, however weak, has in him a power of resistance, no matter in what condition he may be. If it were not so, no Yoga would be possible.

"You wrote to me:

1. 'Up to yesterday, in spite of the inertia one part was keeping itself not only aloof but soaring higher and higher.'

MOTHER INDIA

2. 'Today its pressure is too heavy.'
3. 'It has covered up almost all my active parts which could have driven it out.'

This is my answer to you :

1. Today that part could not keep itself soaring because your mind thought or gave you a thought-like feeling that now the inertia is too much—so you cannot rise above. What a stupidity!—to see a rich man in torn clothes and imagine that he is a beggar!

2. Who says that its pressure is too heavy? Here again, you are taking the stupid mind formations of the general Nature to be yours. That mind always takes pleasure in making little things big and heavy and strong

3. The same thing applies to the third point too. It is not the inertia that has covered up your enlightened parts but a wrong habitual impression. Suppose you say, 'Mother I have not allowed a single part to get veiled', you will see at once all those so-called veiled parts quite unveiled.

"In short, the whole thing depends on the sadhaks themselves; if they think they are fallen, they are fallen. If they think they are soaring, they are soaring."

Sri Aurobindo wrote just above the last sentence: "What you have written down here is from beginning to end true and the right knowledge of the matter."

THE FUTURE POETRY

Sri Aurobindo

15

THE MOVEMENT OF MODERN LITERATURE

2

Out of the period of dominant objective realism what emerges with the strongest force is a movement to quite an opposite principle of creation, a literature of pronounced and conscious subjectivity. There is throughout the nineteenth century an apparent contradiction between its professed literary aim and theory and the fundamental unavoidable character of much of its inspiration. In aim throughout though there are notable exceptions,—it professes a strong objectivity. The temper of the age has been an earnest critical and scientific curiosity, a desire to see, know and understand the world as it is: that requires a strong and clear eye turned on the object and it would seem to require also as far as possible an elimination of one's own personality; a strongly personal view of things would appear to be the very contrary of an accurate observation, for the first constructs and colours the object from within, the second would allow it to impress its own colour and shape on the mind, — we have to suppose, of course, that, as the modern intellect has generally held, objects exist in themselves and not in our own consciousness of them. Goethe definitely framed this theory of literary creation when he laid it down that the ideal of art and poetry was to be beautifully objective. With the exception of some of the first initiators and until yesterday, modern creation has followed more or less this line: it has tried to give either a striking, moving and exciting or an aesthetically sound or a realistically powerful presentation, — all three methods often intermingling or coalescing, — rather than a subjective interpretation; thought, feeling, aesthetic treatment of the object are supposed to intervene upon and arise from a clear or strong objective observation.

But on the other hand an equally strong characteristic of the modern mind is its growing subjectivity, an intense consciousness of the I, the soul or the self, not

MOTHER INDIA

in any mystic withdrawal within or inward meditation, or not in that preeminently, but in relation to the whole of life and Nature. This characteristic distinguishes modern subjectivism from the natural subjectivity of former times, which either tended towards an intense solitary inwardness or was superficial and confined to a few common though often strongly emphasised notes. Ancient or mediaeval individuality might return more self-assertive or violent responses to life, but the modern kind is more subtly and pervasively self-conscious and the stronger in thought and feeling to throw its own image on things, because it is more precluded from throwing itself out freely in action and living. This turn was in fact an inevitable result of an increasing force of intellectualism; for great intensity of thought, when it does not isolate itself from emotion, reactive sensation and aesthetic response, as in science and in certain kinds of philosophy, must be attended by a quickening and intensity of these other parts of our mentality. In science and critical thought, where this isolation is possible, the objective turn prevailed, — though much that we call critical thought is after all a personal construction, a use of the reason and the observation of things for a view of what is around us which, far from being really disinterested and impersonal, is a creation of our own temperament and a satisfaction of our intellectualised individuality. But in artistic creation where the isolation is not possible, we find an opposite phenomenon, the subjective personality of the poet asserting itself to a far greater extent than in former ages of humanity.

Goethe himself, in spite of his theory, could not escape from this tendency, his work, as he himself recognised, is always an act of reflection of the subjective changes of his personality a history of the development of his own soul in the guise of objective creation. From the work of a poet like Leconte de L'isle who attempted with the most deliberate conscientiousness a perfect fidelity to the ideal of an impersonal artistic objectiveness, there disengages itself in the mass an almost poignant impression of the strong subjective personality shaping everything into a mask-reflection of its own characteristic moods; the attempt to live in the thoughts and feelings of other men, other civilisations betrays itself as only the multiple imaginative and sympathetic extension of the poet's own psychology. This peculiarity of the age is noticeable even in many creators whose aim is deliberately realistic or their method founded upon a minute psychological observation, Ibsen or Tolstoi and the Russian novelists. The self of the creator very visibly overshadows the work, is seen everywhere like the conscious self of Vedanta both containing and inhabiting all his creations. Shakespeare succeeds, as far as a poet can, in veiling himself behind his

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creatures; he gives us at least the illusion of mirroring the world around him, a world universally represented rather than personally and individually thought and imaged, and at any rate the Life-spirit sees and creates in him through a faithful reflecting instrument, quite sufficiently universal and impersonal for its dramatic purpose even in his personality. Browning, the English poet who best represented the spirit of the age in its temperament of curious observation and its aim at a certain force of large and yet minute reality, who was eminently a poet of life observed and understood and of thought playing around the observation as Shakespeare was the poet of life seen through an identity of feeling with it and of thought arising up out of the surge of life,—Browning, though he seems to have considered this self-concealment especially admirable and the essence of the Shakespearian method of creation, fails himself to achieve it in anything like the same measure. The self-conscious thinking of the modern mind which brings into prominent relief the rest of the mental personality and stamps the whole work with it, gets into his way; everywhere we feel the presence of the creator bringing forward his living puppets, analysing, commenting, thinking about them or else about life through a variation of many voices so that they become as much his masks as his creations.

Thus both the subjective personality of the man and the artistic personality of the creator tend to count for much more in modern work than at any previous time; the poet is a much greater part of his work. It is doubtful whether we have not altogether lost the old faculty of impersonal self-effacement in the creation which was so common in the ancient and mediaeval ages when many men working in one spirit could build great universal works of combined architecture, painting and sculpture or in literature the epic or romantic cycles or lyric cycles like the Vedic Mandalas or the mass of Vaishnava poetry. Even when there are definite schools marked by a common method, we do not find, as in the old French romance writers or the Elizabethan dramatists or the poets of the eighteenth century, a spiritual resemblance which overshadows individual differences; in the moderns the technical method may have in all similar motives, but difference of subjective treatment so stresses its values as to prevent all spiritual unity. There is here a gain which more than compensates any loss; but we have to note the cause, a growth of subjectivism, an enhanced force, enrichment and insistence of the inner personality.

This trend, though for some time held back from its full development by the aim at the objective method, betrays itself in that love of close and minute

psychological observation which pervades the work of the time. There too the modern mind has left far behind all the preceding ages. Although most prominent in fiction and drama, the characteristic has laid some hold too on poetry. Compared with its work all previous creation seems psychologically poor both in richness of material and in subtlety and the depth of its vision; half the work of Shakespeare in spite of its larger and greater treatment hardly contains as much on this side as a single volume of Browning. Realism has carried this new trend to the farthest limit possible to a professedly objective method, stressing minute distinctions, forcing the emphasis of extreme notes, but in so doing it has opened to the creative mind of the age a door of escape from realism. For, in the first place, while in the representation of outward objects, of action, of character and temperament thrown out in self-expressive movement we may with success affect the method of a purely objective observation, from the moment we begin to psychologise deeply, we are at once preparing to go back into ourselves. For it is only through our own psychology, through its power of response to and of identification with the mind and soul in others that we can know their inner psychology; for the most part our psychological account of others is only an account of the psychological impressions of them they produce in our own mentality. This we see even in the realistic writers in the strongly personal and limited way in which they render the psychology of their creatures in one or two always recurring main notes upon which they ring minute variations. In the end the creative mind could not fail to become conscious of this self within which was really doing the whole work and to turn to it for a theme or for the mould of its psychological creations, to a conscious intimate subjectivism. Again, the emphasising of extreme notes brings us to a point where to go farther we have to go within and to make ourselves a sort of laboratory of new psychological experiment and discovery.

This is the turn we get in the poetry of Verlaine which is throughout a straining after an intimate and subtle experience of the senses, vital sensations, emotions pushed beyond ordinary limits into a certain vivid and revealing abnormality, in the earlier work of Maeterlinck which is not so much an action of personalities as the drama of a childlike desire-soul uttering, half inarticulate cries of love and longing, terror and distress and emotion, in the work of Mallarmé where there is a constant seeking for subjective symbols which will reveal to our own soul the soul of the things that we see. The rediscovery of the soul is the last stage of the round described by this age of the intellect and reason. It is at first mainly the perceptions of a desire soul, a soul of sense

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and sensation and emotion, and an arriving through them at a sort of psychological mysticism, a psychism which is not yet true mysticism, much less spirituality, but is still a movement of the lower self in that direction. The movement could not stop here: the emergence of the higher perceptions of a larger and purer psychical and intuitive entity in direct contact with the Spirit could not but come, and this greater impulse is represented by the work of the Irish poets. It is the sign of the end, now in sight, of a purely intellectual modernism and the coming of a new age of creation, intellectualism fulfilled ceasing by a self-exceeding in a greater motive of intuitive art and poetry.

Thus this wide movement of interests, so many-sided and universal, in man past and present after embracing all that attracts the observing eye in his life and history and apparent nature comes back to a profounder interest in the movements of his deeper self which reveals itself to an extended psychological experience and an intuitive sense. But an insistent interest in future man has been the most novel, the most fruitfully distinguishing characteristic of the modern mind. Once limited to the far-off dream of religions or the distant speculation of isolated thinkers, the attempt to cast a seeing eye as well as a shaping will on the future is now an essential side of the human outlook. Formerly the human mentality of the present lived in the great shadow thrown on it by its past, nowadays on the contrary it turns more to some image of coming possibility. The colour of this futurism has changed with the changes of modern intellectualism. At first it came in on the wave of a partly naturalistic, partly transcendentalist idealism, a reverie of the perfected individual and the perfected society, and was commonly associated with the passion for civic or the idea of a spiritual and personal liberty. A more sober colouring intervened, the intellectual constructions of positivism, liberalism, utilitarian thought which were soon in their turn followed by broader democratic and socialistic utopias. Touched sometimes with an aesthetic and idealistic colouring, they have grown for a time more scientific, economic, practical with the advance of realism and rationalism. But the new force of subjectivism will have probably the effect of rehabilitating the religious and spiritually idealistic element in our vision of the future of the race. Poetry which has been less able to follow this stream of thought than prose literature, will find its account in the change; for it will be the natural interpreter of this more inner and intuitive vision. The futurist outlook has never been more pronounced than at the present day; on all sides, in thought, in life, in the motives and forms of literary and artistic creation, we are swinging violently away from the past into an unprecedented adventure of

new teeming possibilities. Never has the past counted so little for its own sake, -its tradition is still effectual only when it can be made a power or an inspiration for the future, never has the present looked so persistently and creatively forward.

But Nature and man in his active, intellectual and emotional life and physical environment are not the whole subject of man's thought or of his creative presentment of his mind's seeings and imaginings; he has been even more passionately occupied by the idea of things beyond, other worlds and an after life, symbols and powers of that which exceeds him or of his own self-exceeding, the cult of gods of nature and supernature, the belief in or the seeking after God. On this side of the human mind modern literature, though not a blank, has been during the greater part of the nineteenth century inferior in its matter and in its power, because it has been an age of scepticism and of denial or else of a doubtful and tormented, a merely intellectual or a conventional clinging to the residuum of past beliefs. They have not formed a real and vital part of its inner life and what is not real or vital to thought, imagination and feeling cannot be powerfully creative. At first this ebb of positive faith was to some extent compensated for by the ideal element of a philosophic transcendentalism, vague and indefinite but with its own large light and force of inspiration. As scepticism became more positive, this light fades, the most poetic notes of the age which deal with the foundations of life are either the poignant expression of a regretful scepticism, or defiant atheism exulting in the revolt of the great denial, the hymn of the Void, an eternal Nihil which has taken the place of God, or else the large idea of Nature as a universal entity, the Mother of our being. To Science this is only an inconscient Force; the poetic mind with its natural turn for finding a reality even behind what are to the intellect abstract conceptions, has passed through this conception to a new living sense of the universal, the infinite. It has even evolved from it, now and then, a vivid pantheism. The difficult self-defence or reaction of the old faiths against the prevalent scepticism and intellectualism has given too some minor notes; but these are the greater voices of negation and affirmation in this sphere of poetic thought and creation which have added some novel and powerful strains to poetry. With the return to subjective intuition and a fresh adventuring of knowledge and imagination into the beyond modern poetry, freed from the sceptical attitude, is beginning in this field too to turn the balance in its favour as against the old classical and mediaeval literature. The vision of the worlds beyond which it is gaining is nearer, less grossly human, more supernatural to physical Nature; the symbols it is beginning to create and its reinterpretation of the old symbols

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are more adequate and more revealing: rid of the old insufficient forms and limiting creeds, it is admitting a near, direct and fearless seeing and experience of God in Nature, God in man, God in the universal and the eternal. From faith it has advanced through the valley of doubt to the heights of a more luminous knowledge. These are the main movements of the modern mind constituting the turns of a psychological evolution of the most rapid and remarkable kind which have dominated the literature of Europe, now more than ever before growing into a single though varied whole. We have to see how they have worked themselves out in English poetry during this period. We shall then be able to form a clearer idea of the dominant possibilities of the future: for though it has been a side stream and not the central current, yet in the end the highest and most significant, though not yet the strongest forces of the future poetry have converged here and given their first clearest and most distinct sounds. The continent is still overshadowed by the crepuscule of the intellectual age sick unto death but unable to die. Here there are some clear morning voices, English precursors, the revived light of Celtic spirituality, not least significant the one or two accents of a more self-assured message which have broken across the mental barrier between East and West from resurgent India.

WHEN EARTH WAS AN INFANT AND TIME A CHILD

— A 20th Century Sphinx Song —

Eleanor Montgomery

The white from above
And the white from below
Are weaving a chrysalis
Of fire-snow.

From the soles of these feet
To the crown of this head
I'm struck as still as
The mummified dead,

Wrapped in invisible
Twinings of love
O tighter and snugger
Than any known glove,

A skin that is high, wide
And endlessly deep,
A garment of Silence,
Living sleep -

Sleep of surrender,
Seeing Black
Softly silvering,
Travelling back

To primordial beginnings,
Lone, wild,
When earth was an infant,
Time a child.

WHEN EARTH WAS AN INFANT AND TIME A CHILD

O the white from above
And the white from below
Are weaving a chrysalis
Of fire-snow,

Snow softly falling,
Fierily neat,
Gently transforming
Two flame-flowering feet.

The Creeper, the Crawler
Sombrely goes,
The earth stalking Beast
Claimed by the snows -

Snow still falling,
Flaming, free,
Fire cool, quiescent,
Consuming me.

O the white from above
And the white from below
Are sealing their chrysalis
Of pure fire-snow!

* * *

II

Pearl-pinioned I play
In white plenitude,
Tune the deep tone
Of a mystic etude,

Dance the still dance
Of solemnity,
A peacock plumed waltz
Of wild waves, foam-free,

MOTHER INDIA

As the white from above
And the white from below
Come spiralling vapour
Of flame-free snow,

Furling, swirling
A swoon of delight,
Roundly foiling
The sinking night,

Burying Then
In cloud-steppes of far gold,
Enflaming Now
In a radiant fold;

For the light commingling
Quintessential snow
With Fire the darkness
Can easily let go

And the mounting Fire
In the still falling snow
Is boning the void
To a holy glow.

Hidden depths of
Secrecy
Open now
New, fire-free,

Terraced the steep,
Trellised with Flame
Everywhere scrolling
The sacred Name.

Far into future
Flame can see,
Mellowly cancelling
Memory.

WHEN EARTH WAS AN INFANT AND TIME A CHILD

Alive to this marvel
Everywhere,
Mobilely centred
Here - there, there!

Up through an aperture
Opening on skies
Nacreously white
Goes my surmise.

Come heart! Come mind!
Come will to know!
I would arise on
The Fire-driven Snow!...

* * *

III

Leave this longing,
This hybrid home,
Live colossally,
Wander, roam

Freely through seven worlds,
Height, breadth and length,
On flame-feet travel
With leonine strength.

O Pulse of the Purple,
Potent, proud!
I with your Power
Would be endowed.

O Glance of Snow-quietude!
Flame of Repose,
Leap this threshold!
Heart's temple enclose!

MOTHER INDIA

O prime Possessor!
O spacious Whole!
Hear the long cry of
The severed soul!

Crown this tryst
With the soundless Deep
With the high sounding light
Of the vigil I keep;

Transmute, transform
Life's discontent
To Your abiding
Ravishment;

Absolve forever
Blind solitude!
Sustain soul's offering
Of gratitude.

* * *

IV

Awake, awaiting
The smouldering Snows
The phoenix to fathom,
His fire-flight disclose,

All scintillant want
To one moonglow tamed,
Heart's fevered heavings
By Calm shamed,

The desire of the human
Divinely distilled,
Time's proffered cup
Eternally filled,

Star-still luminescence,
A jewelled seed
Rays first sweet sun warmth
From inner need,

WHEN EARTH WAS AN INFANT AND TIME A CHILD

And with sleepless watch
On the glossy abyss,
Black salve-bride to barter,
Sun to possess,

Secretly summons
Godhead, the Bright,
Full faceting firewords
Of opaline night,

When the lengthening gaze
Of the goldening core
Of the chrysalis looks
On Night no more:

The Light from above
And the Light from below
Illumine a rosyng
Universe. O!...

* * *

V

Blazing a trail
Of irradiant Night
An ebonied fountain
Flies to the White!

An embryo turns
In a cosmic womb,
A pillar rises
In God's roofless Room.

One flaming Pole,
A lifted Torch writes
On virgin air
Of far aggregate flights.

Heavenly History
Smiles from above
Redeeming deep past
With the new Word of Love,

MOTHER INDIA

Ransoming Future,
Fore-knowledge contained,
And routing out doubts
From the still unexplained

As Death from a ribboning
Long white crypt
Proclaims the arising
Apocalypt.

* * *

VI

Six thousand sabre thrusts!
Six single eyes!
Over white mountains
Of mind Snow flies!

O tongue that I see with!
O nostril that knows!
Man shall go everywhere
Fire goes.

Enlightened at last
From his burning core,
Man shall soon stand on
Eternity's Shore

God shall step down
In His white House;
Unto Him Sun shall take
Night for Spouse.

Doors of Transparency
Opening wide,
The Master, Sun-Splendour
No longer to hide,

WHEN EARTH WAS AN INFANT AND TIME A CHILD

I am a nothing
Funnelling Fire
That leaps abroad
Higher, higher!

* * *

VII

Snow still falling,
Forming Fire,
Fire mounting:
Plummeting Spire,

Be chrysalis's
Inhabitant
While I on other
Business am bent.

An "I" to an Eye
Metamorphosis,
A cycle of lives
Finishes, closes.

Born of Water.
Bred by Fire,
I incarnate
Divine Desire,

Dawn to daylight,
Ocean wide,
Now to Infinity
Slowly glide.

And O Child of the Chalice,
Suckled on Snows,
Our Mother the Night
The Immortal knows,

MOTHER · INDIA

Never the noble
Night forget,
Or Her divine Power
To enflame : beget.

Light of livingness,
Living Light,
Steadily stronger,
Blazing bright,

Now I know
This burning brings
The Fire-Food
That builds wings.

* * *

BOOKS IN THE BALANCE

WHITE DAWNS OF AWAKENING by Lotika Ghose

(Thaker Spink & Co., Calcutta, 1950. Rs. 4/8).

Here we have a bunch of poems, neatly arranged and dedicated to Sri Aurobindo,—laid at the Master's feet as a flower offering might be. While admitting the faults in poetic form and verbal expression, common enough to the enthusiastic aspirant, it would be unfair on this account to disregard the deep aspiration which is the undoubted source of these poetic utterances,—lispings one is tempted to say. It is the natural unrestrained outflow of the pent-up soul, and there are in places appealing felicities.

Let us dip into this flower-offering and see what gleams we can gather there. The poetic muse "like cranes snow-plumed" stands poised for flight. "Will you soar, will you sail, oh my thoughts?" There are three portions to this poetic work of which the first bears the general title of the book: "White Dawns of Awakening". It is in the second portion, however, that we perhaps find the best selection of poems,—forming appropriately enough the central heart of the work. This is entitled "At the Vedic Altar". Here is the invitation to "come and press with me, oh children of men, The wine of divine rebirth", with its suggestion of the juice dripping to earth to transform and bring eternal joy. It is a fine evocation for the divine rejuvenation of this sorely-tried world. Another interesting image is the poem beginning, "I saw it all, no dream it was This trance of my lunar home", and going on to describe the "bright icy fields" and "the lunar caves". "I heard the groan of the prisoned life of things, As if within that congealed ice Fluttered mighty wings." The moon—symbol of the mental plane—is here not a dead satellite of earth, but a secret entombed life towards which the captive soul in the world feels a vibrant sympathy of kinship. For is it not its natural urge to fly to the Heights and soar in the Bliss of the Divine Perfection? And is it not held captive here like a bird in the congealed icy clasp of this cold unresponding world? So the poet says: "Happiness was there that seemed like frozen tears". A fine inspired line that illumines the whole work.

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But although the urge to escape to the Height is expressed to the full, there is also strongly felt the conscious need to bring the "shining sun of Power" to the earth life, rather than aspiring to reach and remain in "some Heavens far removed". And above all there is the dynamic realisation that one "must be a flame of light" before one can "unlock earth's secret bower". It is natural that, conjoined with the recurrent theme of the imprisoned soul seeking the heavenly light and bliss, the expression of the struggles, hopes and despairs that beset the human heart in its worldly travail should predominate. Yet it is never a deep despair of frustration, such as characterises the bleak modernist poetry, but is ever tempered by a humble appeal to the gods or to the eternal Verities. And there is always the remembrance of a voice, "deep in the heart," that keeps alight a constant hope and secret bliss.

The third and last section, entitled "Waves of Eternity" begins with the awakening of the traveller at the dawn of day. It is the pilgrimage of the soul to seek the heavenly joy and to bring it into the world. Music, dream-experience, the moon and stars, which the traveller encounters on the way, are the constant reminders of a hidden Beauty and of the secret Joy of the Eternal, the Beloved, that ever resides here in the world. And outstandingly the festival of Lights is a special occasion for transforming earthly sorrows into divine joy, where "each tear" becomes "a taper of light" pointing heavenwards. Rest and refreshment for the world-weary traveller can only mean submitting to the call of the Beyond, partaking of the unbodied Stillness, where the mind is released from thought. The Silence is indeed the soothing experience, the replenishing respite from life's constant demands. (Here in the poem "Wind Released" the use of the word "lambent" seems misplaced; it does not give the sense of submissiveness that is apparently intended.)

But where is the Guide in this apparent Nothingness? As though in answer, out of the Silence—miraculously—the help comes; the Lord does not forsake His children,—ever. Sailing on this sea of the Infinite it is He who has taken the helm.....What then can we offer the Lord who is the All? What indeed? Take my joys, the flowers of my life, the fruits of my happiness, exclaims the poet, and keep them for ever in Thine inexhaustible store, There is only only one answer to the heart-prompting question, "What surrender shall I make?" It is, "In your earthly garden Let me surrender my all". The sense of loneliness and isolation reveals itself as the soul's yearning for

BOOKS IN THE BALANCE

the Vast, the Immaculate and the Eternal, while the alternation between the pain of the worldly life and the secret beauty and joy that abides in things around, is but the natural rhythm of the soul's journey tossed on the waves of Life. "My soul, a prisoner bound in time's travail....." neatly sums up the soul's earth-bound experience.

It is earnestly hoped that the poet will give us more of her soul blossoming—with, it is suggested, a more solicitous attention to the poetic form and exact word. No doubt, because of its free and exuberant expression the discipline has been neglected, by which the final elevating poetic word and image would have been often caught. The labour of seeking the right word to convey powerfully and directly the crystalline image brings its own reward. Nevertheless it is a brave attempt to capture the subtle soul's elusive yearning for the Spirit, and render it in poetic form.

N. PEARSON

THE EXISTENTIALIST REVOLT by Kurt F. Reinhardt (Bruce Publishing Co., U. S. A. Price S. 3.50)

Philosophy has often been quite erroneously considered as altogether other-worldly, having no foot on the earth. But as a matter of fact it has meaning and significance only when it is based on human existence and is concerned with it. The mere study of essence divorced from existence is a fruitless vagary. Even if existence be *Maya*, it is with a purpose and only on its basis the highest endeavours of man can really fructify. Existentialist philosophy in its revolt emphasizes this fact, and therefore it makes man's existence the centre of all speculation. It claims that only that philosophy is true philosophy. Other things are mere abstractions in the air leading nowhere.

But Existentialism may be of two kinds. It may concentrate on mere earthly existence, and then it is only materialism. It may base human existence on the existence of God, and correlate human activity to the spiritual. Then it is truly Existentialist philosophy. Dr. Kurt F. Reinhardt discusses Existentialism in all its fullness bringing out its main themes and phases and reveals the nature and source of its value.

It is now widely recognized that humanity has at present reached a crisis in its existence. How this has happened and in what it particularly consists deserve attention. There are many aspects of this crisis; but one major aspect, and according to some the most important, is due to the disregarding of the individuality of man. There is no doubt that human individuality if not altogether in chains is submerged or disregarded in communal or State interests.

Dr. Reinhardt makes his points not merely by abstract arguments and ratiocination but by careful analysis and discussion of the works of Kierkegaard, Nietzsche, Sartre, Marcel and others. Thus quite a comprehensive and illuminative study of an important philosophical subject is supplied by Dr. Reinhardt. Philosophic depth and clearness of presentation are its distinctions.

P. L. STEPHEN

ST. BERNARD ON THE SONG OF SONGS

(A. R. Mowbray, London. Price 12/6)

The layman reads the Song of Songs in the Bible and admires the poetry of King Solomon who is considered to be the author of the book. There is passionate love in it, charming praise of the beauty of the beloved, and plenty of suggestions of the kind of love-dalliance found in the love poems and romances of all times. But to the knowledgeable man the Song of Songs is no mere Romaunt of the Rose. It is a mystic poem of the most fervent but equally deep significance. The lover and the beloved are here no mere ordinary lovers, and every love symbol here has its esoteric meaning. Hence the need for commentaries of the poem by inspired authors. The commentary by St. Bernard has long been recognized as the most illuminating. At the outset he emphasizes the true nature of it, because the apparent and superficial nature of it may lead the reader astray if he is not warned. Thus the mystic author of the Song of Songs writes :

*Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth,
For thy breasts are better than wine,
Lo, thou art fair, my love, lo thou
Art fair! Thou hast dove's eyes.*

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Is it any wonder that the ordinary reader finds here a purely passionate love poem? Yet St. Bernard's analysis and elaboration show that the whole poem is symbolic of the love between God and His devotee. Hence advises St. Bernard: "You must bring chaste ears to listen to this discourse of love..... and when you think about the lovers in it you must not understand by them a man and woman, but the Word and the soul." So considered the Song demands much knowledge and understanding to reveal all the fullness of its meaning. As Juan de Los Angelos, the Spanish mystic, said, "Knowledge of an infinitude of natural things and their properties is needed, since at every step these are introduced as the symbols of things spiritual". Because St. Bernard in his commentary shows deep insight and wide knowledge he has so eminently succeeded in bringing home the significance of this magnificent mystical poem to the hearts and minds of the readers.

P. L. STEPHEN

IN THE SILENCE

A MEDITATION

Gangadhar

- I. Self-Knowledge is Bliss; the confusion, due to ignorance, is sorrow.
- II. To comprehend in a deep seated silence the real existent,—as it is,—is the best way to enjoy the happiness and to become free from the misery.
- III. There is a Reality, wide as the sky, which acts in and through all beings. All are its becoming and manifestation. There is nothing but that. That is all.

It manifests at the same time as the One and the many, in and beyond creation, as the moving and the motionless. It is that which has been worshipped as God by the religions. It is not a mere guess or fantasy, but a reality that can actually be experienced. When, as a result of a life of tapasya, there is a blooming of the inner life and when desire and ego are destroyed, this supreme Reality can be realised, in a deep silence, by all aspirants.

IV. The presence of the Divine is there always, at all places, continuous and full. It is the egoistic individual consciousness that stands as the main stumbling block in realising it; and when the ego is destroyed, none else but the Divine can be seen in this world.

V. The Real is integral.

Every philosophy, which declares the Real as a unity or as a multiplicity, a void, Maya, or nothing else but the visible Nature, and so forth,—whatever be its brilliance or boldness,—does not explain the integral nature of the Divine. What we call the Divine, our idea of the Divine in its full stature includes all the truths found separately in the different religions of the world, philosophies, spiritual codes, the teachings of the ancient texts, all the truths realised till now and are going to be realised hereafter in their entirety.

IN THE SILENCE

VI. It is not by a study of the texts, or by philosophical arguments, or by diligently observing certain religious disciplines, that the supreme truth can be realised. "This is the truth. Such and such is its nature". Clear-cut statements like these cannot be made by anyone. The supreme Truth cannot be known by the sense-organs. It can only be known as a high spiritual experience.

VII. Like an artist who gives shape to his piece of work, from deep layers of thought, we give a form to Truth, with what we have seen, heard, experienced, read and talked about as the basis. We then try to concretise this imaginary form of truth; and still more we declare that this is the supreme Truth and that there is and can be nothing else beyond this. Such a belief may be useful, to a certain extent, to the sadhak at the early stage. But this may lead far away from his goal the sadhak who, with the awakening of his inner being, is intensely in quest of the spirit. Our ideal is not to concretise our fancies and imaginations: it is to see the Real as it is. Is it possible to experience, by means of the mind and its formations, the supreme Truth, which can be realised only in a consciousness beyond that of the mind?

The mind is narrow and restless and, only within certain limits, is able to dissect and analyse events. How is it possible, then, to comprehend, with its help, the ever-living, limitless, infinite, supreme Reality?

If we want to have a full experience of the supreme Truth, the ever-present and ever-living, we must go beyond the mental concepts, thoughts, ideas, likes and dislikes. We must be free from the clutches of what we have seen, heard and talked about; we must be pure as the sky, without any of the mental constructions, and without being affected by anything. We should not determine beforehand the what and how of Truth. We shall only be cheating ourselves by such preconceived notions. Our heart must become calm and firm like a rock which is not affected by anything. It will be enough if we make our subtle and physical organs worthy enough to experience the supreme Truth, accept what is experienced, and manifest it in life. In course of time, we shall realise,—according to our state of preparation,—what is the supreme Truth.

We shall also find a thorough change of all our present conceptions of the Divine. We shall realise, by experience, that the Divine is not someone sitting high above the sky, but an omnipresent, all-becoming supreme Reality.

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VIII. Though all worldly appearances emerge out of the one supreme Being, we cannot conclude that each is the same as the other. Though the fundamental reality behind each is the same, there is a great difference in the growth of each and in manifestation of the reality lying within. The seed and the tree cannot be absolutely the same. The ordinary human being lives in the surface consciousness and, separated as he is, by his egoistic individual consciousness, is whirled in the darkness of ignorance and struggles in the storm of desire. He cannot in any way become equal to the seer who, as a result of a life of tapasya and the descent of the Grace from above, becomes pure, egoless, calm and immersed constantly in the bliss of the Divine. As the sweet smell emerges only out of a full-blown flower, the supreme reality that lies dormant in all manifests in a truly realised soul—then, one with the Divine, he becomes a pure vessel of His Light and Power.

THOUGHTS ON "DARSHAN" DAY: FEBRUARY 21

By a Newcomer from America

A vast and joyous concourse of sadhaks and visitors, from tots to grey-beards but with youth and vigorous middle-age predominating, of both sexes in equal numbers—scholars and peasants, businessmen and sadhus, students and lawyers—all, of whatever age, children in consciousness. For has not each of us a prayer in his heart for a Happy Birthday to Mother and through her a happy New Day to the world?

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The Mother, on the balcony, truly "ageless", as a beautiful young daughter is heard to remark, showering compassion and infinite understanding on her children who look up in adoration, in aspiration and in earnest openness to her Light and Power.

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The words of the Master in his immortal essay, *The Mother*, glow with new meaning today, "Where there is response to the call of the All-Beautiful, and concord and unity and the glad flow of many lives turned towards the Divine, in that atmosphere she consents to abide."

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At the florally transfigured place of *Samadhi*, a strong sense of the Master saying, "Think not of me as merely alive, but as vibrantly, victoriously alive." In the Meditation Hall, his photograph in middle life helps our still partly sense-bound faith to be alive to the vigour of his Presence and Power.

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Are not the colonies of bees in the hospitable tree overspreading the place of *Samadhi* a symbol of the special message of Darshan Day, presented by the Mother to each visitor and sadhak?—

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"Everyone who is turned to the Mother is doing my Yoga. It is a great mistake to suppose that one can 'do' the Purna Yoga—i. e. carry out and fulfil all the sides of the Yoga by one's own effort. No human being can do that. What one has to do is to put oneself in the Mother's hands and open oneself to her by service, by bhakti, by aspiration; then the Mother by her light and force works in him so that the sadhana is done. It is a mistake also to have the ambition to be a big Purna Yogi or a supramental being and ask oneself how far have I got towards that. The right attitude is to be devoted and given to the Mother and to wish to be whatever she wants you to be. The rest is for the Mother to decide and do in you."

The bees, far from displaying their proverbial industry by ranging far afield, simply drop down to the floral offerings on the place of *Samadhi* and reap the fruitage of devotion.

As my spiritual comrade points out, Sri Aurobindo in this Message is only commending to us the Way of utter and unconditional surrender to the Divine which he and the Mother have unswervingly followed. Is this not evident in the model expression of aspiration the Master wrote to help an enquiring sadhak in the same year?—

"I want the Divine and nothing else. I want to give myself entirely to him and since my soul wants that, it cannot be but that I shall meet and realise him. I ask nothing but that and his action in me to bring me to him, his action secret or open, veiled or manifest. I do not insist on my own time and way; let him do all in his own time and way; I shall believe in him, accept his will, aspire steadily for his light and presence and joy, go through all difficulties and delays, relying on him and never giving up. Let my mind be quiet and trust him and let him open it to his light; let my vital be quiet and turn to him alone and let him open it to his calm and joy. All for him and myself for him. Whatever happens I will keep to this aspiration and self-giving and go on in perfect reliance that it will be done."

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The atmosphere of the Ashram is discouraging to all pretence and vanity. "Ego-antics", so common in the average small group, are rarely noted here, even among a thousand—blessed relief! Surely there is here a powerful Force at work to subdue the ego and bring forward the Soul.

THOUGHTS ON "DARSHAN" DAY: FEBRUARY 21

Yet we were warned on arrival not to assume that we are in the company of angels, but rather a grand cross-section of humanity, who form the Mother's laboratory for the Great Transformation.

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One of the powerful impressions of our first weeks in the Ashram has been its unique blend of freedom and order. Even slight acquaintance with Ashrams or other organisations discloses the rules and restrictions with which those in authority strive to prevent their charges from getting out of hand. Not so here. With some 800 sadhaks and other inmates, and at times hundreds of visitors, there is the rare combination of an exhilarating freedom with a delightful and powerful harmony. Is this not the type of the New Society where order stems not from regimentation but from personal devotion and a living sense of unity in the Divine?

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The exhibits, the music, the dancing reveal a rich flowering of art among the inmates of the Ashram, particularly the joyous children. The evolutionary motif is accented in the exhibits, in keeping with the stress on the divine nature and destiny of man by those whom we recognise as leaders in the evolution, Sri Aurobindo and the Mother.

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The marvel of all beholders is the unbelievably life-like portrait of Sri Aurobindo, done from a photograph, etched on a large, disc-shaped, iridescent sea-shell by a devotee in far Tahiti. Many who were drawn back to this speaking likeness of the Master by its superb artistry exclaimed, "Only the Divine could do this!"

With reverent expectancy we mount the staircase and file into the chamber where for a quarter of a century the beloved Master had *darshan* of "the vasts of God" and gave *darshan* to sadhaks and seekers. Far from having the atmosphere of a cloister, the room is spacious, light and airy, with generous windows opening on expanses of sky, as befits the Copernicus of the spiritual world.

Stirred as we are by the thought that here is the *sanctum sanctorum*, we are conscious that for the older sadhaks especially this revisitation must call

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up deeply moving memories. Yet memory swiftly gives way to the realisation that today's *Darshan* reveals the identical Presence, the very same Light and Power in his divine Collaboratrix

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And so even we, kindergarteners in our sadhana, have felt our psychic being drawn forward and feasted on our first *Darshan* Day. Now let us profit from the Mother's *Advice to Newcomers*:

"... It is the psychic alone that can find the solution to the problems. There is therefore only one remedy: Be on your guard, hold fast to the psychic, do not let it recede into the background, allow nothing in your consciousness to slip in between it and yourself, close your ear and your hearing to all other suggestions, put your trust in that alone."
