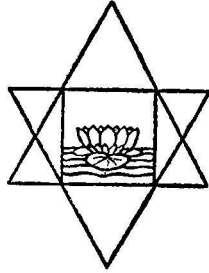


MOTHER INDIA

JANUARY, 1954

Price: Re. 1.



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

* * *

*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

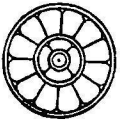
"Great is Truth and it shall prevail"

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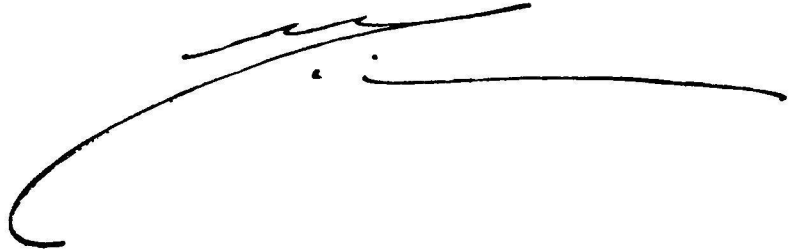
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1954.

My Lord, here is Thy advice to
all, for this year:

"Never boast about anything,
let your acts speak for you."



CORRESPONDENCE WITH SRI AUROBINDO

(Continued from the previous issue)

THE SOUL AND THE EVOLUTION

September, 1935.

MYSELF: You have said that the soul came into evolution for the sake of experience, the call of the Unknown, and passed through the depths of the abyss, to establish the possibilities of the Divine in the Ignorance and the Inconscience.

SRI AUROBINDO: One cannot establish the possibilities of the Divine through the depths of the abyss. It is only by the ceasing of the Ignorance and the Inconscience that the possibilities can be established. I have never said that the object of the creation is to keep up Ignorance and Inconscience perpetually and realise the possibilities of the Divine in that tenebrous amalgam (its possibilities of being more and more abysmally ignorant and inconscient).

MYSELF: If this theory were true, one can say that failures in sadhana, revolt etc.,—or worldly men's running after petty pleasures for that matter,—are there because the soul has still further experiences to acquire and wants to be fully rich and satisfied with chequered experiences before it can finally turn towards its ultimate purpose.

SRI AUROBINDO: That is only another way of putting the revolt of the lower nature. For it is not the soul, the psychic being, but the vital and the physical consciousness that refuses to go farther. How can petty pleasures be rich? Chequered is all right. But it is not when the soul is satisfied, but when it is dissatisfied that it turns towards its ultimate purpose. Of course when the soul no more wants the Ignorance, it will turn to the Light. Till then it can't. That is what I have always said is the reason why I reject the idea of converting the whole of mankind—because they don't want it.

MYSELF: It can also be said that people really don't know that a greater Ananda, Bliss etc. can be had, and if they are told this, they don't believe it, or even if they do, they are not ready to pay the price.

SRI AUROBINDO: Of course they don't, but even if they did, it does not follow that they would prefer to follow it rather than their accustomed round of pain and pleasure. Many deliberately prefer that and say the other thing is too high for human nature—which is true, because you have to want to grow out of human nature before you can have the Ananda. Many struggle towards the Ananda but cannot reach it because though the soul and even the thinking mind and the higher vital want it the lower vital and physical want something else and are too animal and strong in them for control. Or the ego wants something that is not that or wants to misuse the Power for its own satisfaction.

MYSELF: Perhaps they are not ready to pay the price because the soul clings to the Ignorance for the sake of experience, if what you say about the origin of creation is true.

SRI AUROBINDO: What has the origin of creation to do with it? We are concerned with the growth of the soul out of the Ignorance, not its plunge into it. The lower nature is the nature of the Ignorance, what we seek is to grow into the nature of the Truth. How do you make out that when the soul has looked towards the Truth and is moving towards it, a pull back by the vital and the ego towards the Ignorance is a glorious action of the soul and not a revolt of the lower nature? I suppose you are floundering about in the confusion of the idea that the 'desire-soul' in the vital is the true psyche of man. If you like—but that is no part of my explanation of things; I make a clear distinction between the two, so I refuse to sanctify the revolt of the lower nature by calling it the sanction of the soul. If it is the soul that wants to fail, why is there any struggle or sorrow over the business? It would be a perfectly smooth affair.

The soul would lift its hat to me and say "Hallo! You have taught me a lot, I am quite pleased but now I want a little more fun in the mud. Good-bye", and I too would have to say, "O. K. I quite agree. I was glad to see you come, I am equally glad to see you go. All is divine— all has the soul's sanction; so go and mud away to your soul's content".

MYSELF: I was not at all 'floundering about' between 'desire-soul' and the true 'psyche'.

SRI AUROBINDO: Well, if you were not, why did you represent the experience of the lower nature as such a rich and glorious thing? It is the desire-soul or the life being that finds it (sometimes) like that.

CORRESPONDENCE WITH SRI AUROBINDO

MYSELF: If failures are due to the revolt of the lower nature, why should that revolt occur in A's case and not in B's? Past Karma? And by what is this Karma decided?

SRI AUROBINDO: Because A is not B and B is not A. Why do you expect all to be alike and fare alike and run abreast all the way and all arrive together?

It is Prakriti and Karma, so long as the Ignorance is there. The hen lays an egg and the egg produces a hen and that hen another egg and so on ad infinitum—till you turn to the Light and get it.

MYSELF: And this Karma has its past, and this past its own past and so on till we come to a state where there is no Karma and only central beings. This central being, it seems, chooses its particular sheath of mental, vital etc. and upon that choice depends the evolutionary consequences. Is that correct?

SRI AUROBINDO: What is this central being you are speaking of—the Jivatma or the psychic being? or an amalgam of both?—I don't quite understand. The psychic being is supposed not to choose, but rather to form in accordance with its past and future evolution a new mental, vital and physical sheath each time it is born. But the placid or tacit observation does not seem to apply to the psychic being, but to the Jivatma. Moreover you seem to say this is done at the beginning of the evolution and determines the whole evolution. But that has no meaning since it is through the evolution that the psychic does it. It has not got one fixed mental, vital, physical which remains the same in all lives.

MYSELF: Since the soul descended into Ignorance through a process of devolution, it has to come up through evolution.

SRI AUROBINDO: What is this 'devolution'? Let me hear more about it,—for it is new to me. I know of an involution and an evolution, but not of a devolution.

MYSELF: You say that the soul takes birth each time according to its past evolution and its *need for the future*, that it takes up with it as much of its Karma as is useful for *farther experience*. Now, since the soul can't at once take a leap like the prodigal son into the Kingdom of Light, I can say that the soul has failed this time because it "took up with it so much of its Karma" and requires farther evolutionary experience.

MOTHER INDIA

SRI AUROBINDO: A leap, no! But if it has got thoroughly disgusted, it can try its chance at Nirvana.

Excuse me,—if it goes on with its Karma, then it does not get liberation. If it wants only farther experience, it can just stay there in the ordinary nature. The aim of Yoga is to transcend Karma. Karma means subjection to Nature; through Yoga the soul goes towards freedom.

NIRODBARAN

NOTES FROM THE MOTHER'S TALKS

BAD THOUGHT FORMATION

A BAD thought is a bad act. You may not know it, but an evil thought is truly an evil act. If you think ill of a man and wish him ill, you are responsible for the mishaps that may befall him to the same degree as when you act ill towards him. Unfortunately, an evil thought is not a recognised crime and nobody intervenes when you think ill. Not only so, there are a good many people who consider it a play to excite wicked thoughts in others. They do so (innocently, they think,) sometimes through sheer stupidity, more often through vanity, through an air of self-importance for having said something interesting.

When you have a bad thought, you make an evil formation and you carry it about you or throw it out. It happens sometimes that when you pass by a man, you suddenly feel unwell, you may not connect the two and you may know nothing of the matter, but in fact the man may have been entertaining an evil thought and it has pounced upon you.

When you find out the cause, then what you have to do is to chase it away, as if it were a fly. The flies are sometimes very troublesome, the more you drive them away the more they come and take it as an amusing game. But if you are serious and have the will, you succeed in driving them out. In the same manner when an evil formation seeks to possess or touch you, push it away immediately, push it away again and again till it disappears.

Why should there be a bad will at all, you ask?

You go into the very origin of things. Why is there inconstancy, ignorance and obscurity? You ask for the why and wherefore of the universe. Why is creation like this and not otherwise? Every one has explained in his own way. The philosophers have done so, the scientists have done so, on different lines. But none has found the way out. You ask why there is bad will, but the truly interesting and important thing is to find a means whereby there would be no bad will. What is the use of asking why there is pain and suffering and misery, unless it is to find out the remedy? If you look for the why, you may find as many

explanations as you like, each may be useful in a way, but none leads you anywhere, except into a blind alley.

There are many things in the world you do not approve of. Some people who, as they put it, wish to have the knowledge, want to find out why it is so. It is a line of knowledge. But I say it is much more important to find out how to make things otherwise than they are at present. That is exactly the problem Buddha set before himself. He sat under a tree and continued till he found the solution. The solution, however, is not very satisfactory: "You say, the world is bad, let us then do away with the world"; but to whose profit, as Sri Aurobindo asks very pertinently? The world will no longer be bad, since it will exist no more. The world will have to be rolled back into its origin, the original pure existence or non-existence. Then man will be, in Sri Aurobindo's words, the all-powerful master of something that does not exist, an emperor without an empire, a king without a kingdom. It is a solution. But there are others, which are better. We consider ours to be the best. There are some who say, like the Buddha, evil comes from ignorance, remove the ignorance and evil will disappear. Others say that evil comes from division, from separation; if the universe were not separated from its origin, there would be no evil. Others again declare that it is an evil will that is the cause of all, of separation and ignorance. Then the question is, from where do this bad will come? If it were at the origin of things, it must have been in the origin itself. And then some question the bad will itself,—there is no such thing, essentially, fundamentally, it is pure illusion.

Do animals have a bad will?

I do not think so. Things spoken of in relation to animals as monstrous are not really due to a bad will. Let us take for example the insect world. Of all animals it is this species which seems to have most the attribute of wickedness, something akin to a bad will. It may, however, be simply that we are applying our own mode of consciousness to theirs, we impute bad will to an action which is not really of the kind. For example, there are insects whose larva can live only upon a living being; they have to feed upon a living creature, they do not get nourishment from dead flesh. So the parent insect before laying the eggs that are to become larvae first prepares the ground: it finds another insect or a small animal, stings into a nerve centre and paralyses it; then safely lays eggs in that paralysed body, which not being dead feeds the larvae when they come out of the eggs. All this looks very much machiavellian. But nothing is reasoned out here, it is pure instinct. Would you call it bad will? it is simply the will to propagate. You can say perhaps that these insects are moved by a

spirit of the species which is conscious and has a conscious will and that this will is an evil will. These beings that create or form the various species of the insect world—many working in a much more monstrous way than the example I have given—must then truly be frightful, inspired by a perverse and diabolic imagination. Quite possible. For it is said that the origin of the insect world is in the vital; the builders of that world belong to the vital and not to the material plane of consciousness; in other words, they not only symbolise, but they represent and live the evil will. They are fully conscious of their evil will and they exercise that will deliberately and with a set purpose. Man's bad will is often only a reflection, an imitation of the bad will of vital beings which is a will clearly hostile to the created world, whose express intention it is to make things as painful, as difficult, as ugly, as monstrous as possible. It is these beings, some say, that have created the insects. Even then, the insects cannot be described as representing the evil will, since they do not do mischief purposely, they are moved by an unconscious will in them. The bad will is really that will which does evil for the sake of doing evil, which seeks to destroy for the sake of destroying, that takes pleasure in doing wrong. In the animal I do not think there is this kind of evil will, especially in the higher species. What is there is the instinct of self-preservation, obscure and violent reactions, but not the kind of evil that human will shows in the perverse human mental. I believe it is the human mind under the direct influence of vital beings that begins to work in the perverse way. Titans, Asuras are the beings of ill-will, they belong totally to the vital world and when they manifest themselves in this world of ours, they mean mischief, they do evil for the sake of doing evil, they destroy for the sake of destroying, they have the delight of negation.

People speak of the wickedness of cats, when the cats, for example, play with the mice before eating them. I have observed the matter and I know what it is. It is not at all as you think. The cats do what they do, not through wickedness or wanton cruelty. The mother cat hunts for the sake of her young ones. She catches a mouse; if she gave it immediately as it is to the babies, they would not be able to eat, it would be hard and tough flesh. So she plays with it, to us she seems to do so; she plays, that is to say, throws it up, rolls it, catches it again, gives it a few blows, tosses it once more, all that simply to soften the flesh, to prepare it beforehand, so that the little ones can put their teeth into it and eat easily. It is not certainly playing with the intention of only playing, for the pleasure of it. There is as much ill-will behind it as there is behind man's killing in the slaughter-house. The animal hunts and prepares its food, its prey, in the best way it can. It has no oven, no fireplace, no cooking; it must have some way of its own to make its food soft and edible.

MOTHER INDIA

It is said also that the first expression of love in living beings is the desire to eat him whom one loves. To love means to embrace, to absorb, to devour. This seems to prove the fact that when the tiger catches its victim or the snake his, the victim in either case, although alarmed in the beginning, do not at all suffer, but lets himself go in a sort of delight of being devoured. I shall narrate to you a true story, the experience of a person from whom I heard it. A man was passing through a bush in the company of friends. The friends were a little ahead, he was behind. Suddenly he was caught by a tiger, a man-eater. The companions turned back to know what had become of their absent friend. They followed the marks and ran up just in time to prevent the tiger from swallowing their friend. When he had recovered a little he was told what a frightful experience he must have gone through. "Not at all", he declared to the astonishment of everybody, "just imagine, I did not know what had happened, but as I was being dragged along by the tiger, I felt a great love for him and I had a great desire that he should eat me! Well, it is a true fact and I do not exaggerate. Once upon a time I saw with my own eyes something very similar. In the zoological gardens of Paris, a huge python was kept in a cage. It was the hour of feeding the animals and I happened to be present. The cage was opened and a young white rabbit was put in. It was a pretty little animal. As soon as it saw the serpent, it ran to the other corner of the cage and sat doubled up all trembling. The serpent had not moved at all, had simply turned round its head. It seemed as if it was half asleep, quietly it put out its neck and head and began to look at the rabbit. It was horrible, the picture. The serpent only looked at the rabbit without moving. Now I saw another picture. The rabbit that was a mass of fright, ceased trembling; it had shrunk itself, it became normal. Then it lifted its head, opened wide its eyes and gazed at the serpent; it began to move slowly, very slowly, forward and when it had come sufficiently near, the neck of the serpent shot out and the rabbit was in its mouth. Then came the task of preparing the food. The serpent rolled, twisted, broke the limbs of its prey, munched it into something like a soft mass that might more easily go down the gullet. Where is the ill will, the wickedness in all this? When a man does anything like it, he does not do it spontaneously, through his natural instinct, but driven by his mind and mental perversions, a thing different from the healthy instinct that he has no more. But man wanted to act freely and independently!

What is instinct exactly? It is Nature's consciousness. Nature is conscious of her action; it is not an individual consciousness. It is a global or collective consciousness. There is also a consciousness of the species. Each species has its consciousness which is called sometimes the spirit of the species, that is to say, a conscious being presiding over a particular species. Nature is conscious

in the sense that she knows what she wants, she knows her whither and her how, her end and the way to go towards it. To man much of Nature seems incoherent, because his consciousness is narrow and he has not an over-all vision. When you look at the small details, the little fragments, you do not understand; you do not find any link, sequence, sense. But Nature has a conscious will, she is a conscious being. Perhaps the word "being" is too human. When we speak of Nature's being, we naturally think of the human being, only a little bigger, or perhaps much bigger but working more or less in the same way. But it is not so. Instead of the word "being", I would prefer the word "entity". The conscious entity that is Nature has a conscious will and it does things much more deliberately and purposively than man, and it has formidable forces at its disposal. Man speaks of blind and violent Nature. But it is man who is blind and violent, not Nature. You say an earthquake is a terrible affair. Thousands of houses crash into dust, millions of people are killed, whole cities devastated, entire portions of earth are swallowed up etc. etc. Yes, from the human point of view Nature seems monstrous. But what has she done after all? When you get a knock on your body somewhere, there appears a blue patch. Are you worried about it? Your earthquake is nothing more than a reshuffling of a cell in your body. You destroy thousands of cells every moment of your life. You are monstrous? That is the relative proportion. And consider, we are speaking of earth alone and earthly events. But what is this earth itself in the bosom of the universe? A point, a zero. You are walking on the ground and are not looking down. You place one step forward and then another and you trample thousands of innocent ants under your feet. If you were an ant you would have cried out, what a cruel and stupid force! Imagine other forces stalking about much bigger than yourself and under their casual steps millions of creatures like you are crushed, continents are pressed down and mountains kicked up. They do not even notice such catastrophic happenings! The only difference between man and ant is that man knows what happens to him and the ant does not. But even there are you sure?

NOLINI KANTA GUPTA.

THE SECRET OF THE VEDA

SRI AUROBINDO

CHAPTER III

MODERN THEORIES

It was the curiosity of a foreign culture that broke after many centuries the seal of final authoritativeness which Sayana had fixed on the ritualistic interpretation of the Veda. The ancient Scripture was delivered over to a scholarship laborious, bold in speculation, ingenious in its flights of fancy, conscientious according to its own lights, but ill-fitted to understand the method of the old mystic poets; for it was void of any sympathy with that ancient temperament, unprovided with any clue in its own intellectual or spiritual environment to the ideas hidden in the Vedic figures and parables. The result has been of a double character, on the one side the beginnings of a more minute, thorough and careful as well as a freer handling of the problems of Vedic interpretation, on the other hand a final exaggeration of its apparent material sense and the complete obscuration of its true and inner secret.

In spite of the hardness of its speculations and its freedom in discovery or invention the Vedic scholarship of Europe has really founded itself throughout on the traditional elements preserved in Sayana's commentary and has not attempted an entirely independent handling of the problem. What it found in Sayana and in the Brahmanas it has developed in the light of modern theories and modern knowledge; by ingenious deductions from the comparative method applied to philology, mythology and history, by large amplifications of the existing data with the aid of ingenious speculation, by unification of the scattered indications available it has built up a complete theory of Vedic mythology, Vedic history, Vedic civilisation which fascinates by its detail and thoroughness and conceals by its apparent sureness of method the fact that this imposing edifice has been founded, for the most part, on the sands of conjecture.

The modern theory of the Veda starts with the conception, for which Sayana is responsible, of the Vedas as the hymnal of an early, primitive and

largely barbaric society crude in its moral and religious conceptions, rude in its social structure and entirely childlike in its outlook upon the world that environed it. The ritualism which Sayana accepted as part of a divine knowledge and as endowed with a mysterious efficacy, European scholarship accepted as an elaboration of the old savage propitiatory sacrifices offered to imaginary superhuman personalities who might be benevolent or malevolent according as they were worshipped or neglected. The historical element admitted by Sayana was readily seized on and enlarged by new renderings and new explanations of the allusions in the hymns developed in an eager hunt for clues to the primitive history, manners and institutions of those barbarous races. The naturalistic element played a still more important role. The obvious identification of the Vedic gods in their external aspects with certain Nature-Powers was used as the starting-point for a comparative study of Aryan mythologies; the hesitating identification of certain of the less prominent deities as Sun-Powers was taken as a general clue to the system of primitive myth-making and elaborate sun-myth and star-myth theories of comparative mythology were founded. In this new light the Vedic hymnology has come to be interpreted as a half-superstitious, half-poetic allegory of Nature with an important astronomical element. The rest is partly contemporary history, partly the formulae and practices of a sacrificial ritualism, not mystic, but merely primitive and superstitious.

This interpretation is in entire harmony with the scientific theories of early human culture and of the recent emergence from the mere savage which were in vogue throughout the nineteenth century and are even now dominant. But the increase of our knowledge has considerably shaken this first and too hasty generalisation. We now know that remarkable civilisations existed in China, Egypt, Chaldea, Assyria many thousands of years ago, and it is now coming generally to be agreed that Greece and India were no exceptions to the general high culture of Asia and the Mediterranean races. If the Vedic Indians do not get the benefit of this revised knowledge, it is due to the survival of the theory with which European erudition started, that they belonged to the so-called Aryan race and were on the same level of culture with the early Aryan Greeks, Celts, Germans as they are represented to us in the Homeric poems, the old Norse Sagas and the Roman accounts of the ancient Gaul and Teuton. Hence has arisen the theory that these Aryan races were northern barbarians who broke in from their colder climes on the old and rich civilisations of Mediterranean Europe and Dravidian India.

But the indications in the Veda on which this theory of a recent Aryan

invasion is built, are very scanty in quantity and uncertain in their significance. There is no actual mention of any such invasion. The distinction between Aryan and unAryan on which so much has been built, seems on the mass of the evidence to indicate a cultural rather than a racial difference.¹ The language of the hymns clearly points to a particular worship or spiritual culture as the distinguishing sign of the Aryan,—a worship of Light and of the powers of light and a self-discipline based on the culture of the “Truth” and the aspiration to Immortality,—Ritam and Amritam. There is no reliable indication of any racial difference. It is always possible that the bulk of the peoples now inhabiting India may have been the descendants of a new race from more northern latitudes, even perhaps, as argued by Mr. Tilak, from the Arctic regions; but there is nothing in the Veda, as there is nothing in the present ethnological features² of the country to prove that this descent took place near to the time of the Vedic hymns or was the slow penetration of a small body of fair-skinned barbarians into a civilised Dravidian peninsula.

Nor is it a certain conclusion from the data we possess that the early Aryan cultures—supposing the Celt, Teuton, Greek and Indian to represent one common cultural origin,—were really undeveloped and barbarous. A certain pure and high simplicity in their outward life and its organisation, a certain concreteness and vivid human familiarity in their conception of and relations with the gods they worshipped, distinguish the Aryan type from the more sumptuous and materialistic Egypto-Chaldean civilisation and its solemn and occult religions. But those characteristics are not inconsistent with a high internal culture. On the contrary, indications of a great spiritual tradition meet us at many points and negate the ordinary theory. The old Celtic races certainly possessed some of the highest philosophical conceptions and they preserve stamped upon them even to the present day the result of an early mystic and intuitional development which must have been long of standing and highly evolved to have produced such enduring results. In Greece it is probable that the Hellenic type was moulded in the same way by Orphic and Eleusinian influences and that Greek mythology, as it has come down to us, full of delicate

¹ It is urged that the Dasyus are described as black of skin and noseless in opposition to the fair and high-nosed Aryans. But the former distinction is certainly applied to the Aryan Gods and Dasa Powers in the sense of light and darkness, and the word ‘*anasa*’ does not mean noseless. Even if it did, it would be wholly inapplicable to the Dravidian races; for the southern nose can give as good an account of itself as any “Aryan” proboscis in the North.

² In India we are chiefly familiar with the old philological divisions of the Indian races and with the speculations of Mr Risley which are founded upon these earlier generalisations. But a more advanced ethnology rejects all linguistic tests and leans to the idea of a single homogeneous race inhabiting the Indian peninsula.

psychological suggestions is a legacy of the Orphic teaching. It would be only consonant with the general tradition if it turned out that Indian civilisation has throughout been the prolongation of tendencies and ideas sown in us by the Vedic forefathers. The extraordinary vitality of these early cultures which still determine for us the principal types of modern man, the main elements of his temperament, the chief tendencies of his thought, art and religion, can have proceeded from no primitive savagery. They are the result of a deep and puissant prehistoric development.

Comparative Mythology has deformed the sense of man's early traditions by ignoring this important stage in human progress. It has founded its interpretation on a theory which saw nothing between the early savage and Plato or the Upanishads. It has supposed the early religions to have been founded on the wonder of barbarians waking up suddenly to the astonishing fact that such strange things as Dawn and Night and the Sun existed and attempting in a crude, barbaric, imaginative way to explain their existence. And from this childlike wonder we stride at one step to the profound theories of the Greek philosophers and the Vedantic sages. Comparative Mythology is the creation of Hellenists interpreting un-Hellenic data from a standpoint which is itself founded on a misunderstanding of the Greek mind. Its method has been an ingenious play of the poetic imagination rather than a patient scientific research.

If we look at the results of the method, we find an extraordinary confusion of images and of their interpretations in which there is nowhere any coherence or consistency. It is a mass of details running into each other, getting confusedly into each other's way, disagreeing yet entangled, dependent for their validity on the license of imaginative conjecture as our sole means of knowledge. This incoherence has even been exalted into a standard of truth; for it is seriously argued by eminent scholars that a method arriving at a more logical and well-ordered result would be disproved and discredited by its very coherency, since confusion must be supposed to be the very essence of the early mythopoeic faculty. But in that case there can be nothing binding in the results of Comparative Mythology and one theory will be as good as another; for there is no reason why one particular mass of incoherence should be held to be more valid than another mass of incoherence differently composed.

There is much that is useful in the speculations of Comparative Mythology; but in order that the bulk of its results should be sound and acceptable, it must use a more patient and consistent method and organise itself as part of

a well-founded Science of Religion. We must recognise that the old religions were organic systems founded on ideas which were at least as coherent as those which constitute our modern systems of belief. We must recognise also that there has been a perfectly intelligible progressive development from the earlier to the later systems of religious creed and of philosophical thought. It is by studying our data widely and profoundly in this spirit and discovering the true evolution of human thought and belief that we shall arrive at real knowledge. The mere identification of Greek and Sanscrit names and the ingenious discovery that Heracles' pyre is an image of the setting sun or that Paris and Helen are Greek corruptions of the Vedic Sarama and the Panis make an interesting diversion for an imaginative mind, but can by themselves lead to no serious result, even if they should prove to be correct. Nor is their correctness beyond serious doubt, for it is the vice of the fragmentary and imaginative method by which the sun and star myth interpretations are built up that they can be applied with equal ease and convincingness to any and every human tradition, belief or even actual event of history.¹ With this method we can never be sure where we have hit on a truth or where we are listening to a mere ingenuity.

Comparative Philology can indeed be called to our aid, but, in the present state of that Science, with very little conclusiveness. Modern Philology is an immense advance on anything we have had before the nineteenth century. It has introduced a spirit of order and method in place of mere phantasy; it has given us more correct ideas of the morphology of language and of what is or is not possible in etymology. It has established a few rules which govern the phenomena of the detrition of language and guide us in the identification of the same word or of related words as they appear in the changes of different but kindred tongues. Here, however, its achievements cease. The high hopes which attended its birth, have not been fulfilled by its maturity. It has failed to create a Science of Language and we are still compelled to apply to it the apologetic description given by a great philologist after some decades of earnest labour when he was obliged to speak of his favourite pursuits as "our petty conjectural sciences." But a conjectural Science is no Science at all. Therefore the followers of more exact and scrupulous forms of knowledge refuse that name altogether to Comparative Philology and deny even the possibility of a linguistic science.

¹ E. g. Christ and his twelve apostles are, a great scholar assures us, the sun and the twelve months. The career of Napoleon is the most perfect Sun-myth in all legend or history.

There is, in fact, no real certainty as yet in the obtained results of Philology; for beyond one or two laws of a limited application there is nowhere a sure basis. Yesterday we were all convinced that Varuna was identical with Ouranos, the Greek heaven; today this identity is denounced to us as a philological error; tomorrow it may be rehabilitated. *Parame vyoman* is a Vedic phrase which most of us would translate "in the highest heaven", but Mr. T. Paramasiva Aiyar in his brilliant and astonishing work, *The Riks*, tells us that it means "in the lowest hollow"; for *vyoman* "means break, fissure, being literally absence of protection, (uma); and the reasoning which he uses is so entirely after the fashion of the modern scholar that the philologist is debarred from answering that "absence of protection" cannot possibly mean a fissure and that human language was not constructed on these principles. For Philology has failed to discover the principles on which language was constructed or rather was organically developed, and on the other hand it has preserved a sufficient amount of the old spirit of mere phantasy and ingenuity and is full of precisely such brilliances of hazardous inference. But then we arrive at this result that there is nothing to help us in deciding whether *parame vyoman* in the Veda refers to the highest heaven or to the lowest abyss. It is obvious that a philology so imperfect may be a brilliant aid, but can never be a sure guide to the sense of Veda.

We have to recognise in fact that European scholarship in its dealings with the Veda has derived an excessive prestige from its association in the popular mind with the march of European Science. The truth is that there is an enormous gulf between the patient, scrupulous and exact physical sciences and these other brilliant, but immature branches of learning upon which Vedic scholarship relies. Those are careful of their foundation, slow to generalise, solid in their conclusions; these are compelled to build upon scanty data large and sweeping theories and supply the deficiency of sure indications by an excess of conjecture and hypothesis. They are full of brilliant beginnings, but can come to no secure conclusion. They are the first rough scaffolding for a Science, but they are not as yet Sciences.

It follows that the whole problem of the interpretation of Veda still remains an open field in which any contribution that can throw light upon the problem should be welcome. Three such contributions have proceeded from Indian scholars. Two of them follow the lines or the methods of European research, while opening up new theories which if established, would considerably alter our view of the external sense of the hymns. Mr. Tilak in his "Arctic Home in the Vedas" has accepted the general conclusions of European scholarship, but by a fresh examination of the Vedic Dawn, the figure of the Vedic cows

and the astronomical data of the hymns, has established at least a strong probability that the Aryan races descended originally from the Arctic regions in the glacial period. Mr. T. Paramasiva Aiyar by a still bolder departure has attempted to prove that the whole of the Rig Veda is a figurative representation of the geological phenomena belonging to the new birth of our planet after its long-continued glacial death in the same period of terrestrial evolution. It is difficult to accept in their mass Mr. Aiyar's reasonings and conclusions, but he has at least thrown a new light on the great Vedic mythus of Ahi Vritra and the release of the seven rivers. His interpretation is far more consistent and probable than the current theory which is not borne out by the language of the hymns. Taken into conjunction with Mr. Tilak's work it may serve as the starting-point for a new external interpretation of the old Scripture which will explain much that is now inexplicable and recreate for us the physical origins if not the actual physical environment of the old Aryan World.

The third Indian contribution is older in date, but nearer to my present purpose. It is the remarkable attempt by Swami Dayananda, the founder of the Arya Samaj, to re-establish the Veda as a living religious Scripture. Dayananda took as his basis a free use of the old Indian philology which he found in the Nirukta. Himself a great Sanscrit scholar, he handled his materials with remarkable power and independence. Especially creative was his use of that peculiar feature of the old Sanscrit tongue which is best expressed by a phrase of Sayana's,—the "multi-significance of roots." We shall see that the right following of this clue is of capital importance for understanding the peculiar method of the Vedic Rishis.

Dayananda's interpretation of the hymns is governed by the idea that the Vedas are a plenary revelation of religious, ethical and scientific truth. Its religious teaching is monotheistic and the Vedic gods are different descriptive names of the one Deity; they are at the same time indications of His powers as we see them working in Nature and by a true understanding of the sense of the Vedas we could arrive at all the scientific truths which have been discovered by modern research.

Such a theory is, obviously, difficult to establish. The Rig Veda itself, indeed, asserts¹ that the gods are different names and expressions of one universal Being who in His own reality transcends the universe; but from the language of the hymns we are compelled to perceive in the gods not only different names, but also different forms, powers and personalities of the one Deva. The monotheism of the Veda includes in itself also the monistic, pan-

¹ R. V I 164. 46 and 170-1.

theistic and even polytheistic views of the cosmos and is by no means the trenchant and simple creed of modern Theism. It is only by a violent struggle with the text that we can force on it a less complex aspect.

That the ancient races were far more advanced in the physical sciences than is as yet recognised, may also be admitted. The Egyptians and Chaldeans, we now know, had discovered much that has since been rediscovered by modern Science and much also that has not been rediscovered. The ancient Indians were, at least, no mean astronomers and were always skilful physicians; nor do Hindu medicine and chemistry seem to have been of a foreign origin. It is possible that in other branches also of physical knowledge they were advanced even in early times. But the absolute completeness of scientific revelation asserted by Swami Dayananda will take a great deal of proving.

The hypothesis on which I shall conduct my own enquiry is that the Veda has a double aspect and that the two, though closely related must be kept apart. The Rishis arranged the substance of their thought in a system of parallelism by which the same deities were at once internal and external Powers of universal Nature, and they managed its expression through a system of double values by which the same language served for their worship in both aspects. But the psychological sense predominates and is more pervading, close-knit and coherent than the physical. The Veda is primarily intended to serve for spiritual enlightenment and self-culture. It is, therefore, this sense which has first to be restored.

To this task each of the ancient and modern systems of interpretation brings an indispensable assistance. Sayana and Yaska supply the ritualistic framework of outward symbols and their large store of traditional significances and explanations. The Upanishads give their clue to the psychological and philosophical ideas of the earlier Rishis and hand down to us their method of spiritual experience and intuition. European Scholarship supplies a critical method of comparative research, yet to be perfected, but capable of immensely increasing the materials available and sure eventually to give a scientific certainty and firm intellectual basis which has hitherto been lacking. Dayananda has given the clue to the linguistic secret of the Rishis, and reemphasised one central idea of the Vedic religion, the idea of the One Being with the Devas expressing in numerous names and forms the many-sidedness of His unity.

With so much help from the intermediate past we may yet succeed in reconstituting this remoter antiquity and enter by the gate of the Veda into the thoughts and realities of a prehistoric wisdom.

SRI AUROBINDO AND AESTHETICS

(Continued from the previous issue)

Author's Note

In an exposition of this kind of Sri Aurobindo's aesthetics, it would have been presumptuous to state in my own language the findings which come so naturally in the large utterance of Sri Aurobindo. I have, therefore, endeavoured to state Sri Aurobindo's thought in his own words, especially in sections which are concerned with his distinctive contribution to aesthetics. Quotation marks would be superfluous in sections which are all quotation. I have, therefore, reserved quotation marks only for statements which, because of their importance, are reproduced in their precise form. My own additions are mainly expository and interpretative. They are to be found mainly in the first, fourth and twelfth sections. The fourth section deals with axioms derived from the Master's luminous perceptions of the essence of poetry and illustrates the power of multiple suggestion so characteristic of his intuitions. Expository remarks made by me in other sections will, I believe, be clear in their own context. I have hewn rich blocks of marble from far and wide in Sri Aurobindo's domain and placed them together like a little child building a shrine in honour of its master. A few suggestions by my friend D.R. Bendre have been made use of in the section on "Aesthesis and the Overhead Consciousness". Throughout the essay, the abbreviation 'F.P.' stands for 'The Future Poetry'. 'A' for the 'Arya' Journal and 'L. 3' for 'Letters, Third Series'. As 'The Future Poetry' was not published in book form at the time this essay was written, quotations from it had to be given page-numbers not of the book but of the 'Arya'.

(7) THE ARTIST AND THE SPIRIT OF DELIGHT

IT is the universal Ananda that is the parent of aesthesis. The universal Ananda takes three major and original forms,—beauty, love and delight, the delight of all existence, the delight in things, in all things. Universal Ananda is the artist and creator of the universe witnessing, experiencing and taking joy in its creation. In the lower consciousness, Ananda creates its opposites, the sense of ugliness as well as the sense of beauty, hate and repulsion and dislike as well as love and attraction and liking, grief and pain as well as joy and delight;

and between these dualities or as a grey tint in the background there is a general tone of neutrality and indifference born from the universal insensibility into which the Ananda sinks in its dark negation in the Inconscient. All this is the sphere of aesthesis, its dullest reaction is indifference, its highest is ecstasy which is a sign of a return towards the original or supreme Ananda. For as the consciousness sinks from the supreme levels through various degrees towards the inconscience, the general sign of this descent is an always diminishing power of its intensity, intensity of being, intensity of consciousness, intensity of force, intensity of the delight in things and the delight of existence.

In the lower consciousness and under the spell of its opposites, the majority of human beings lead their instinctive life, dominated by hunger, sleep, fear and sex. Humanity bears this common stamp of animal existence. The average emotional life of humanity is made up of anger, sorrow, fear and apathy and, on a slightly higher level, of attraction, laughter, enthusiasm and wonder.

But as we climb beyond Mind, higher and wider values replace the values of our limited mind, life and bodily consciousness. The *sattwic* man sublimates his lower mental and emotional energy. He develops simple attraction into a noble sentiment of friendship and of love. Laughter he transforms into humour, a humour steeped in gentleness and drenched with pity. Buoyancy and enthusiasm he turns into a deep, subdued and cheerful striving for the ideal. Hatred and scorn for what is mean and low, he transforms into a sublime indifference. He glimpses a divine peace and delight in moments of deep contemplation. But Peace has not settled on him with her golden wings and become a permanent possession. Delight is a rare visitant.

It is only when the seeker ceases to be merely *sattwic* and develops a psychic awareness that there is an increase in the intensity of his delight. Growing aware of the World-Soul and feeling towards the World-Soul as towards a Person, he cultivates what Sri Aurobindo calls the Godward emotions, approaching the Person as Master, Father, Friend, Mother, Beloved. He strives to recast his mental, emotional, and active life in the light of this identification, if not identity. Gradually, as his psyche dominates the frontal consciousness, a deep and abiding faith is his. His is also a devout persistence in his service to the Ideal, *nishtha*; a concentration of all his meditation on the Absolute, *avadhana*; and a deep and steady realisation of the effulgence of the Spirit, *anubhava*.

The capacity for pleasure and pain, for liking and disliking, is comparatively poor on the level of our mind and life; our capacity for ecstasy is brief

and limited; these tones arise from a general ground of neutrality which is always dragging them back towards itself. But as he enters the overhead planes, with his deep psychic sensitiveness, the seeker is capable of a high, a large, or a deep abiding ecstasy. The ground is no longer a general neutrality, but a pure spiritual ease and happiness upon which the special tones of aesthetic consciousness come out or from which they arise. This is the first fundamental change.

Another change in this transition is a turn towards universality in place of the isolations, the conflicting generalities, the mutually opposing dualities of the lower consciousness. The artist, no doubt, can look at things only plain or shabby or ugly or even repulsive to the ordinary sense and see in them and bring out of them beauty and the delight that goes with beauty. But this is a sort of special grace for the artistic consciousness and is limited within the field of his art. As the seeker grows in the light of the overhead consciousness, these things become more and more the law of the vision and the law of the nature. They can come on the mental and vital plane even before those planes are directly touched or influenced by the spiritual consciousness. But they are there a temporary experience and not permanent or they are limited in their field and do not touch the whole being. They are a glimpse and not a change of vision or a change of nature.

On the supreme level itself, the seeker is permeated by Reality. He can now easily ascend to his supreme heights at will and descend again to work here below with that light a change in the material universe. He has a close knowledge by identity and, at the same time, a wide cosmic consciousness. In the overmind there is a first firm foundation of the experience of a universal beauty, a universal love, a universal delight. Wherever the overmind spiritual man turns he sees a universal beauty touching and uplifting all things, expressing itself through them, moulding them into a field or objects for his divine aesthesis; a universal love goes out from him to all things; he feels the Bliss which has created the worlds and upholds them. Every form becomes beautiful to him in a deeper and larger sense of beauty than that commonly known to us. The overmind looks also straight at and into the soul of each thing and not only at its form or its significance to the mind or to the life; this brings to it not only the true truth of the thing but the delight of it. It sees also the one spirit in all, the face of the Divine everywhere and there can be no greater Ananda than that; it feels oneness with all, sympathy, love, the bliss of the Brahman. In a highest, a most integral experience it sees all things as if made of the one Supreme Existence, Consciousness, Bliss, every atom of them charged with and constituted of Sachchidananda.

On certain levels of the Overmind, where the mind element predominates over the element of gnosis, the distinction between truth and beauty is still valid. It is indeed one of the chief functions of the overmind to separate the main powers of the consciousness and give to each its full separate development and satisfaction, bring out its utmost potency and meaning. But also there is another action of Overmind which reunites separated things, which reconciles opposites. On that level truth and beauty become one, inseparable. On that level the true is always the beautiful and the beautiful is always true. Their highest fusion perhaps only takes place in the Supermind.

(8) AESTHESIS AND THE OVERHEAD CONSCIOUSNESS

We have traced the various transformations that take place in the artist's consciousness and his capacity for delight and its intensity from the instinctive to the intuitive and overmind level. How do these transformations affect the aesthesis in the artist?

By aesthesis is meant a reaction of the consciousness, mental and vital and even bodily, which receives a certain element in things, something that can be called their taste, *Rasa*. Passing through the mind or sense or both, *Rasa* awakes a vital enjoyment of the taste, *Bhoga*. *Bhoga* can again awaken us, awaken even the soul in us to something yet deeper and more fundamental than mere pleasure and enjoyment, to some form of the spirit's delight of existence, *Ananda*. Aesthesis is not confined merely to a reception of poetry and art. It extends to everything in the world. There is nothing we can sense, think or in any way experience to which there cannot be an aesthetic reaction of our conscious being. Ordinarily, we suppose that aesthesis is concerned with beauty. Beauty, no doubt, is its most prominent concern. But it is concerned with many other things also. All the dualities of ugliness and beauty, and pain and pleasure are the sphere of aesthesis. There can be, for instance, an aesthetic response to truth also,—a joy in its beauty, a love created by its charm, a rapture in the finding, an aesthetic joy in its expression. The poet can be a seeker and lover of truth as well as of beauty. If he has the passion, then even a philosophic statement of truth he can surcharge with this sense of power, force, light, beauty. The dullest reaction of aesthesis is indifference, its highest is ecstasy.

Aesthesis is, therefore, preeminently an *attitude* of human personality. When the human mind is detached and calmly observant and the vital keen and receptive, the human consciousness is able to grasp the *Rasa* or the essence of what it observes, whether it be a poem, a tree, an emotion, thought or dream.

Brooding on this experience, the apprehension of the *rasa* or essence of the thing observed, the mind awakes in us a vital enjoyment of this taste or essence. If this enjoyment is allowed to sink deep within the soul, if we brood over it and remember it in 'tranquillity', it awakens us to something yet deeper than mere pleasure and enjoyment, to some form of the spirit's delight of existence. Aesthesis, therefore, is a threefold process. It implies a wise passiveness of the mind and readiness of the vital to grasp the *essence* or *taste* of the thing observed. Secondly, it presupposes a vital enjoyment of this taste, the total surrender of the personality to the magic or spell of the essence of the object. Thirdly, it assumes the absorption of this enjoyment deep into the soul through meditation and quiet brooding, awakening us to Ananda, to something deeper and more fundamental than mere pleasure and enjoyment. It is through this process that the poet gets his vision and experience which he expresses in his poetry.

It is also in this way that the reader of poetry obtains his enjoyment and delight, with poetry as his object. For poetry brings us first of all a *Rasa* of word and sound. It also brings a *Rasa* of the idea. Through the idea, it brings a *Rasa* of the things expressed by the word and sound and thought, a mental or vital or sometimes the spiritual image of their form, quality and impact upon us. If the poet is strong enough, it brings even an image of their world-essence, their cosmic reality, the very soul of them, the spirit that resides in them as it resides in all things. Every object in the universe can give us this experience of *Rasa*, *Bhoga* and *Ananda*. Poetry and art, in their own way, serve the seeking for these things. In order to be of such service, they have to embody such an aesthesis.

We are here concerned, not with poetry as an object of aesthetic contemplation, but as the expression of the ever-evolving aesthesis that is there in the poet. Beautiful things awaken a response of this type more easily in the consciousness of the poet. But, as we have seen, aesthesis is concerned with many other things also. Aesthetics has been called the theory of beauty. More generally speaking, it is the theory of *Rasa*, of the response of the mind, the vital feeling and the sense to a certain 'taste' in things or their essence. This feeling need not necessarily be a spiritual feeling. It may, in fact, stop with mere pleasure or enjoyment as it does in 'vital' poetry which mainly thrills the nerves and excites the blood. That is why aesthetics and the overhead consciousness cannot be equated together. Aesthetics belongs to the mental range and all that depends upon it. It may even degenerate into aestheticism or narrow itself into some version of 'Art for Art's sake'.

But, as we climb beyond Mind, aesthesis shares in the general intensification of capacity. It turns into a pure delight and becomes capable of a high, a large or a deep abiding ecstasy. A divine, a universal aesthesis of beauty and delight is the gradual result of this ascent. This higher aesthesis does not ignore or fail to understand the differences and oppositions, the gradations, the harmony and disharmony obvious to the ordinary consciousness. But, first of all, it draws a *Rasa* even from these oppositions and disharmonies, and with that comes the enjoyment, bhoga, and the touch or the mass of the Ananda. It sees that all things have their meaning, their value, their deeper or total significance which the mind does not see, for the mind is only concerned with a surface vision, surface contacts and its own surface reactions. When something expresses perfectly what it has meant to express, the completeness brings with it a sense of harmony. It gives even to what is discordant a place in a system of cosmic concordances and the discords become part of a vast harmony. And wherever there is harmony, there is a sense of beauty.

On the overmind level, consciousness surpasses its own ordinary mental self and takes its stand on a spiritual foundation. It embraces beauty and sublimates it. It has an essential aesthesis which is not limited by rules and canons. It sees a universal and an eternal beauty while it takes up and transforms all that is limited and particular. A total response is not only possible but imperative on this level. Overmind is especially concerned with truth. It goes beyond truth of fact and truth of thought. It has, at its highest, the truth that comes by the most intimate spiritual touch or by identity. Ultimately, truth and beauty come together and coincide, but in between there is a difference. Overmind in all its dealings puts truth first. It brings out the essential truth in things, even the truth that lies behind falsehood and error, the truth of the inconscient and the truth of the superconscient and all that lies in between. On this level, the dictum that truth must depend upon aesthetics to become poetic at all, has no longer any meaning. For there truth itself is highest poetry and has only to appear to be utterly beautiful to the vision, the hearing, the sensibility of the soul. This greater aesthesis is inseparable from the greater truth, it is deeper because of the depth of that truth.

(To be continued)

V. K. GOKAK

THE APSARA—THE DANCING MUSE

(Picture-Reading at Ajanta)

“WHAT’S an Apsara?” The human brain was plexed to know your being
For ages past—
Till one among us had dipped his brush into the hues of the sunset
And daubed the flattened stone to give you a face: he caught
The midday glare to shape your eyes and sowed the harvest of the midnight skies
To lend the light-points to your pupils. Your lips have caught
The smile of Timelessness!

You seem a mortal, O Apsara, for you have a human form:
Though a cloud that’s clothed in colour and shaped in mortal curves,
You dwell on the walls of Time eternally.
Your ethereal form is drawn in maiden lines—
Thus mortalized, O goddess, you’ll immortal be!

In a rhythm of moveless muscles your body sways,
And your pliant limbs do rise and fall
In a silent cadence etched upon the cavern’s wall—
Sounding the ceaseless dance within the ancient hall!

Even the fragrance of your garlands is heady still,
Your bracelets time the silver at your ankles, each jewel smiles,
And the very floor must needs reflect the ripple of your dance!

They say the gods had shaped us men: if that be so,
Their art has erred, for no mortal man can perfect be:
What human hand has writ upon the walls with simple paint
And humble tint, has sure surpassed the godly art—
You are perfect, O Apsara!

CHARLES A. COELHO

I RIDE WITH THE STRONG...

I RIDE with the strong on a horse that is might
and carry the weaklings who moan,
I float with the clouds, fall in drops with the rain,
and moisten the plants that have grown.

I dream with the moon and give light with the sun,
my soul is divinely afire,
my spirit shoots forth thousand arrows of gold
and I chant blissful songs on the lyre.

Let us sing a great rhapsody of beauty and joy,
let us prove we can overcome doom,
let us ponder and feel the heart's glamour and hope,
let us worship God's creation and bloom.

FRANCISCO STRUCK.

CONSCIOUSNESS AND THE BRAIN

A SCRUTINY OF SCIENTIFIC OPINIONS

III

(Continued from the issue of October)

WE have already shown that, taking normal facts and their implications into consideration, we can come to no argument in favour of epiphenomenalism or against interactionism. What now remains to be shown is the spectacularly absolute *coup de grace* administered to the brain-dependence hypothesis by the study of ESP—extra-sensory perception. For, this study proves that mental phenomena can actually happen without physical correlates and be effective without physical means. And the main interest here of its proof is that the evidence it provides is strictly scientific and demolishes all materialism, whether of the crude kind or of the subtilised variety, by methods by which the materialist has always sworn. The paranormal or parapsychological tests have been devised and recorded on an objective and statistical basis by a large number of qualified workers—Rhine, Salter, Soal, Tyrell, Carington and others. All scientific technique employs tests on such a basis and regards them as decisive.

It is, therefore, no wonder that the editors of *Science News* felt obliged in the interest of truth to get parapsychology critically discussed in their ninth and eighteenth numbers. In the latter issue it is Mrs. Knight herself who discusses it at some length, and as her temper inclines her towards the brain-dependence hypothesis and as she has opined in her compilation from James that, though the transmission theory fits the facts more easily, epiphenomenalism may still not really be impossible to maintain, we should be able to come to final grips with the issue of ESP by scrutinising her article, *Theoretical implications of Telepathy*.

By way of introduction to Mrs. Knight's article let us glance at the earlier one entitled *Telepathy* by Dr. Eric J. Dingwall and Denys Parsons. The authors were selected because they had an enormous experience of psychical research, encyclopaedic knowledge of conjuring and acutely critical minds. The result is a fair and objective survey, all the more impressive in its positive pointers on account of its cautious tone. The authors acknowledge telepathy as a proved

fact. What they write on its *modus operandi* and its implications may be regarded as illustrating the genuinely scientific attitude:

“How does an idea ‘get across’ from one mind to another? Is there indeed any ‘transmission’ at all? The hypothesis that telepathy is a new form of radiation is now in disfavour, the chief objection being that the phenomenon appears to be independent of distance and time. It must be remembered, however, that our knowledge of the limits of sensory powers is still far from complete. Griffiths and Galambos have shown that bats avoid obstacles in the dark by supersonic echo-sounding, and Yeagley’s recent work with homing pigeons strongly suggests that they navigate by responding simultaneously to variations in the earth’s magnetic field and to variations in the Coriolis force caused by the rotation of the earth.¹ F. W. H. Myers, one of the founders of the Society for Psychical Research, had realised at a very early stage that the unconscious mind was deeply involved in most paranormal phenomena, and later work has confirmed this view. H. H. Price, Wykeham Professor of Logic at Oxford, in a broadcast talk, has pointed out that it is nonsense to suppose that minds are specifically separate entities; minds are not objects in space. If we assume that every mind is a causally separate insulated system we are denying that an event in any one mind ever directly affects any other mind. But that is exactly what telepathy seems to be, so the question ‘how does the idea get across?’ is equivalent to ‘how does telepathy happen, if we assume that it never can happen?’ Price insists that we must revise our notion of what a mind is, and suppose that on the unconscious level there are no sharp boundaries between one mind and another. Whately Carington has developed this notion of a common unconscious in a recent book, *Telepathy*, and combined it with the familiar laws of association of ideas. His hypothesis is that when an associative linkage between two ideas is formed in one mind, it is theoretically available to all minds. In a telepathy experiment, for instance, the target drawing is associated by the experimenter with the ‘idea-of-the-experiment’. The percipient is also concerned with the ‘idea-of-the-experiment’ and the linked idea of the target drawing emerges from the common subconscious to the conscious mind.”

We may remark that Carington’s association-hypothesis appears not to cope with cases of spontaneous telepathy and seems at best to apply to conditions which facilitate telepathic communication. But whether it can cover all contingencies is not the important point. The important point is that this hypo-

¹ In *Science News* 23, J V T. Matthews, summing up the present position in our knowledge of bird-navigation, writes: “mixed theories such as the magnetic-coriolis theory, which require the development of two special senses, are particularly unsatisfactory.”—K.D.S.

thesis, like any other we may construct, is connected with the notion unescapable by science that mind can affect mind directly, without sensory or physical means, without even using physical space as a medium of transmission. The fact of telepathy cuts the ground completely from under the feet of epiphenomenalism.

And if we add the two other findings of parapsychologists—namely, precognition and psychokinesis—the case against epiphenomenalism will be definitive in detail as well as many-pronged. For, just as telepathy means the working of some faculty independently of space, precognition means the working of some faculty independently of time, if not of causality too, and psychokinesis means the working of some faculty which, voluntarily as in the case of the Duke University experiments with dice, or unconsciously as in certain poltergeist outbreaks, affects without physical intermediary the movements of material objects. The evidence for these faculties is really just as genuine from the scientific statistical standpoint: the only difference is that it is not so voluminous. The difference is quantitative, not qualitative. About Soal and Goldney's precognition tests, our authors write: "The most elaborate precautions were taken to guard against fraud, and sensory leakage, such as unconscious whispering. Many of the safeguards were inherent in the design of the experiment. "Even the quantitative difference is not, in the case of precognition, very considerable. But orthodox science has a rigidity inherited from its immediate materialist past. To quote Dr. Dinwall and Denys Parsons again: "Scientists are not inclined to regard with favour ideas of 'precognition' and attempts have been made (so far, we think, with little success) to discover serious flaws in Soal's experiments or, failing that, to devise a telepathic hypothesis, however elaborate, which might circumvent an interpretation in terms of precognition. Soal's work lends some support to a precognition explanation of the spontaneous cases of premonitions, etc. which have been sifted and analysed by H.F. Saltmarch." The verdict, therefore, of unbiased scientific observers is that the critics of precognition have hardly any logic at their back, and we may take it that abundant acceptance of both precognition and psychokinesis is merely a matter of a few years. The fact of telepathy is itself a *prima facie* ground for crediting precognition; for, here is independence not only of distance but, in an important sense, also of time: unlike radiation, it is instantaneous. A breach in physical time is already made by it and precognition merely widens it in a new startling direction. Even if telepathy had no such direct bearing on the possibility of precognition, it would be quite enough of an anti-epiphenomenalist explosive. Of course, its occurrence is not common or at least not commonly discerned, but its

establishment by the very methods of science jobs of all basic force the epiphenomenalist concept of the enslavement of the psychological to the physical and proves mind to be an existent on its own and capable even of functioning on a "plane" beyond the physical universe.

This conclusion is not affected by Mrs. Knight's essay. Although all hope of finding a physical explanation is not given up and several hurdles are sought to be erected in the path of a non-physical one, there is absolute honesty in the presentation of paranormal facts and there are even more radical admissions than in the article by Dingwell and Parsons. We are told: "As Thouless convincingly argues, it is a waste of time to conduct further laborious experiments merely to *demonstrate* the occurrence of ESP. This has now been established beyond reasonable doubt. The aim of future experiments should be to *elucidate the conditions* of its occurrence, for in this way alone can we hope to explain its nature." This statement is all the more significant because by ESP the author does not mean telepathy only: half of her article is concerned with precognition and she accepts that "advance" hits were scored in stringently conditioned experiments so greatly in excess of chance expectations that the odds against their being in fact due to chance were, on the most conservative estimate, of the order of 10^{32} (i.e. 1 followed by 32 "Os") to 1.

She takes it upon herself to return a clear answer to the four most important criticisms about such astonishing results. She writes: "First, the successes could not have been due to inadequate shuffling of the cards. No use was made of such relatively crude methods as hand shuffling: the order of presentation of the cards was systematically 'randomized', by methods which are familiar to statisticians, and which are fully described in the original articles.

"Secondly, the critic may point out that it is notoriously easy (as witness the case of the horse Clever Hans described in *Nerv Biology No. 5*¹) for the agent (the alleged 'transmitter') to convey information to the subject quite unwittingly by the tone of his voice or by small unconscious movements. In Soal's experiments, however, agent and subject were unable to see each other, and the agent never spoke. The signal 'next guess' was given by a third person (referred to as 'the experimenter'), who sat close to the agent, but who, at the time of giving the signal, had not seen the upturned card.

¹ This horse was for a time believed by many people (including his owner) to be tapping out answers to sums held up before him on a slate. It was finally discovered that he was in fact responding to tiny unconscious signs of tension and relaxation made by the person holding the slate,

“Thirdly, it may be said that the methods of statistical analysis employed must have been either (a) intrinsically unsound, or (b) unsuited to the particular type of material. The answer to (a) is that the methods employed were the normal techniques for the assessment of odds against chance, that to reject them would involve rejecting the whole mathematical theory of probability which forms the theoretical basis of statistics. As regards (b), the application of these methods to the experimental data was carried out under the supervision of some of the leading authorities in the country including Professor R.A.Fisher, and none of the many statisticians who have since scrutinized the procedure have been able to make any but minor criticisms which do not affect the statistical significance of the results.

“Fourthly, the critic may point out that the most perfect statistical techniques will give misleading results if they are applied to data that have been selected to prove a case. Can we be sure that nothing of the sort has happened here? Can we be sure, in other words, that the results statistically analysed are in fact *all* the results?—that the experimenters have never succumbed to the temptation (so familiar to those who have ever tried a promising hypothesis statistically) of saying, after an unsuccessful result, ‘we won’t count this one’? The answer can be given categorically. No result was ever ruled out after the event. The only results that were not included in the final calculations were the results of certain runs of guesses (such as the clairvoyant runs shortly to be described¹), which it had been decided in advance should not form part of the main experiment.”

After this sharp though brief scrutiny of the objections, Mrs. Knight elucidates the immensity of the odds involved and gives her general conclusion. “As already stated, the odds against chance in the second experiment with Shackleton were of the order of 10^{32} to 1. What this implies may be made clearer by a parallel. The chance of guessing the day and month of a person’s birthday correctly at the first attempt is, of course, 1 in 365 (if we disregard leap years). Now, as we can discover by the use of logarithmic tables, 10^{32} equals approximately 36512; so that the odds against Shackleton’s results being due to chance are equivalent to the odds against correctly guessing the birthdays of twelve people in succession. In short though we can never completely eliminate the possibility that the results may be no more than a gigantic coincidence, the probability is so small that it may in practice be disregarded: whether we like it or not, we must accept the conclusion that there is some cause-factor involved that we do not yet understand.”

¹ The description is: “runs in which the agent merely touched the back of the card without looking at it”

Then, facing “the most disturbing feature of the experiments...precognition”, she searches for the most “plausible” explanation of the undeniable “cause-factor”—the explanation that would least demand the abandonment of theoretical presuppositions favourable to a materialistically inclined science. “The only remotely plausible explanation that has been so far offered,” she writes, “is that put forward by the late H. F. Saltmarsh. Saltmarsh pointed out that (as has long been recognised) what we experience as ‘now’ has always some extension in time. Experiences, one might say, do not drop into the past, but fade into the past; a moment of time with no duration, like a point in space with no magnitude, is a mere conceptual artefact. Furthermore, the duration of the ‘specious present’, as it is technically called, varies with the individual’s mental attitude; it is less when he is concentrating intensely, greater when he is relaxed. These facts are generally accepted, but the specious present has usually been regarded as extending only into the past. Saltmarsh, however, suggested that it may also extend a short distance into the future; and he further suggested that the duration of the specious present may be greater at the subconscious than at the conscious level, so that an event that is already past or still to come, for the conscious mind, may be ‘now’ for the subconscious. Telepathic communication is generally held to take place at the subconscious level, so that Saltmarsh’s hypothesis would, if it were credible, provide a possible explanation of precognition. The hypothesis receives some support from the fact that when, in the experiment with Shackleton, the interval between guesses was increased from 3 seconds to 5, the subject became restless and irritable and ceased to score above chance expectations.”

As Mrs. Knight notes, the extension of awareness into the future—which is the essence of the specific mystery of precognition—is not avoided by Saltmarsh’s theory. Even to touch the future 3 seconds ahead is to revolutionise the whole meaning of time and causality and to raise the query whether the new meaning is compatible with materialism. Mrs. Knight records that most workers in the field of ESP argue that no physical cause can account for a subject’s cognisance of future events. But to her the argument does not seem entirely conclusive. She states: “If we can swallow the colossal *prima facie* improbability that an event E₂ can cause an event E₁ which precedes it in time, it is surely straining at a gnat to suggest that the improbability is greater if E₂ and E₁ are physical than if they are mental events.”

Some confusion is at work in this statement. Precognition implies not only that two periods of time—the present and the future—are as if at the same moment but also that two locations in space are as if at the same point, for event E₂ and

event E₁ occur in different places as well as in different times, the former where the agent sits and the latter where the subject does. In other words, precognition implies telepathy into the bargain. Now, if we talk of precognition in physical terms instead of mental, E₂ which is to occur in the brain of a person 3 seconds from now causes E₁ which occurs just now in the brain of another person: the second person's brain knows at the moment what the first one's brain which will know the same thing 3 seconds afterwards makes it know. But brains are definitely separate entities located in space. To suggest that precognition occurs as between brains is to put them not only outside the time observed in the physical universe but also outside that universe's space, for the two brains have had communication as if they had been existent at the same point. This is to contradict all that we know of brains, whereas of minds we may argue, as does Professor Price whom Dingwall and Parsons as well as Mrs. Knight quote, that they cannot be considered entirely separate entities: they cannot be reduced completely to spatial systems such as brains are and, at least at the subconscious or subliminal level they have every appearance of being "uncapsulated", a joint entity. Mrs. Knight herself refers towards the end of her article to psychologists being familiar with the hypothesis of a "common unconscious" put forward by Jung who, according to her, "based his view mainly on the fact that certain symbols and images, which he called 'archetypes', and which bear very little resemblance to the experiences of normal life, occur with striking consistency in folk-lore, fairy-tales, dreams and the delusions of the insane." Hence, on her own admissions, the "colossal *prima facie* improbability" involved in precognition must be far smaller if E₂ and E₁ are mental than if they are physical events. To refuse to believe they are physical events is not to strain at a gnat but to avoid swallowing a second camel on top of the first.

How big this camel may be can be gauged still more if in addition to looking at the common or collective unconscious in relation to space we look at it in relation to time. Jung has an eloquent passage: "If it were permissible to personify the unconscious, we might call it a collective human being combining the characteristics of both sexes, transcending youth and age, birth and death, and, from having at his command a human experience of one or two million years, almost immortal. If such a being existed, he would be exalted above all temporal change; the present would mean neither more nor less to him than any year in the one hundredth century before Christ; he would be a dreamer of age-old dreams and, owing to his immeasurable experience, he would be an incomparable prognosticator. He would have lived countless times over the life of the individual, of the family, tribe, and people, and he would possess the living sense of the rhythm of growth, flowering, and decay."

Something that could be “an incomparable prognosticator” may promise to be extended in the future no less than in the past and to supply a ground for the phenomena of precognition as well as of what parapsychologists call retro-cognition or clairvoyant awareness of concealed past events. A sort of “altogetherness” seems a feature of the collective subliminal and it is hardly illogical to think of this feature as covering not space alone but time also. At least Dr. Jacobi, with Jung’s authority behind her, has written: “The unconscious manifests itself in such a way that it seems to stand outside of space and time: it is spaceless and timeless.” We have, on the other hand no reason to think of brains as being free of time-limitations any more than of space-limitations.

A physical explanation of the precognitive experience is really an impossibility. It would be an impossibility even if the telepathic experience were physically explicable. But that experience, too, defies physical explanation. Mrs. Knight is honest enough to concede about telepathy: “The upholders of mental causation must be granted their point, that belief in a physical cause of telepathy is at present little more than an act of faith.” However, she enters a *caveat*. She asks us not to regard as entirely conclusive the argument that since telepathic communication, unlike all known forms of physical radiation, seems to be unaffected by distance, a physical explanation is untenable. She counter-argues: “The longest distance over which results of undoubted significance have been obtained is some 200 miles—between London and Merkses, in Belgium. The alleged evidence for telepathy over longer distances—as between New York and London—is quite unconvincing. To conclude from this data alone that telepathic communication is unaffected by distance *may* be as fallacious as it would be to conclude that wireless reception is unaffected by distance because we can tune in to Luxembourg as easily as to the Third Programme.”

That “may”, of course, is welcome as indicating that merely a possibility is being pointed out. And how poor the possibility is has been shown in the very next paragraph by Mrs. Knight herself: “The wireless analogy must not be pressed too far. It is true that electrical activity is continually going on in the brain, and that certain characteristic rhythms of brain activity can be picked up and recorded by appropriate instruments. These and similar facts have made the man-in-the-street very receptive to the suggestion that ESP may be due too ‘some kind of wireless effect’. But it must be emphasised that there is no evidence whatever that a human brain is capable of picking up radiations from another brain, or that the effect of such ‘reception’, even if it could occur, would be to cause the recipient to have conscious experiences which were similar to those of the transmitter.”

Yes, the possibility of "mental radio" is extremely poor. Equally meagre is the chance of reducing telepathy to the action of "other sensory modalities besides those we already know"—modalities which, as Mrs. Knight says, must differ from the known ones not only in degree but in kind. Still, she is inclined to clutch at straws as when she writes that if dowsing or water-divining can be shown to be a genuine physical phenomenon—say, a reaction to some kind of electromagnetic influence—there should be in the case of telepathy no premature closing of our account with physical reality." This is clutching at straws because she also writes: "Admittedly, there is only a remote analogy between dowsing and ESP." A similar disparate concession to the supposed scientific temper of scepticism about the extra-sensory appears to be in the *caveat* to which we have referred.

Moreover, the *caveat*, taken even in isolation, is based on a mistake. Within a range of 200 miles it may be as easy for a Londoner to tune in to a place in Belgium as to the BBC in his own city and then the law of inverse square connecting distance with intensity in physical radiation may have no perceptibly crucial bearing. But examine the situation a little differently. Do not try to show that within such a range the intensity can hardly be proved to be always uniform or that, judging from short-distance experience, we should refrain from generalising that the intensity never weakens over any stretch of space. Try rather to answer the question: If telepathy obeys the inverse square law, would not a person who could send a telepathic message from Luxembourg to London produce with the same effort an enormously powerful effect from one room to another in the same house? There is no record of any such overwhelming impact at close quarters. This completely demonstrates that, unlike physical radiation, telepathy is unaffected by distance.

With the establishment of telepathy as being not due to physical causes, precognition, which is the greater marvel and which Mrs Knight considers a fact as indispensable as telepathy, becomes *a fortiori* non-physical. All the small hesitations she feels bound to register have no value and impede not in the slightest the clear doom rung spectacularly of Epiphenomenalism by ESP.

(To be continued)

K. D. SETHNA

INTERNATIONAL ISSUES AND MAN'S SPIRITUAL GROWTH

(Continued from the previous issue)

Recently some questions were put by the students of the Political Society of the Makerere College, East Africa, to A. B. Puram of Sri Aurobindo Ashram apropos a lecture of his. They are given here, together with the answers.

Q: If a man makes his own religion, which is his union with his God and Creator, is there any necessity of external things like churches and mosques?

A: The true function of any religion is to help man to realise the Supreme. If, as you say, man unites himself with God, then he needs no religion. But generally all current religions have two aspects:—

(i) The inner experience of the Higher Reality, God;

(ii) The external aspect of it made up of ceremonials, rites and outer behaviour attempts first of all to symbolise certain inner truths, and secondly, to organise the social life of the community in such a way as to prepare it for the inner experience. This social organisation of religions is bound to change as time passes. It is connected mainly with social, economic, cultural and other factors which go on changing and therefore a change is necessary, or becomes necessary as time passes, in the outer forms. A religion that cannot adapt its outer forms to these changes ceases to live. That is what seems to have happened to many forms of religion in Europe.

The inner core of religion which is made up of experience of Higher Reality does not change. That is eternal. In fact, it is basically the same for all religions. It was Sri Ramakrishna Paramhansa of India who at the end of the last century successively practised many religions according to their own methods and discovered, or rather rediscovered, for humanity the great truth that the experience or if you like the realisation, behind all the religious efforts of man is the same. He illustrated it by a very simple story that if a man who satisfied his thirst with water at one end of a vast lake, he might come and report that he had taken water. Another might say that he had drunk 'Jala'. A third might report that he had

taken 'Pani'. Ramakrishna said that all of them mean to say and refer to the same Reality.

If modern man can understand this simple truth, he might then find that churches and mosques and temples have their importance but he would also know that they have their limitations. In fact, to one who earnestly seeks the Divine, churches, mosques and temples are of secondary importance.

Q: You say that people receive inspirations from God so as to comprehend the supernatural life, and you say that not all receive such inspirations, since God gives them as he pleases. Do you think there is any need to struggle for such, for one can struggle in vain. And do you think there is any need for religious institutions intended for contemplative life; for many souls may lead a contemplative life without any effect. They may even end in despondency. Moreover, such inspirations, given without any merit at times, encourage Fatalism and vain hope in predestination.

A: You attribute to me things which I never said. In trying to think about these matters, we must separate religious beliefs from philosophical and psychological truths or ideas. Above the realm of human reason, there are planes of consciousness, and therefore psychological powers available to man. Most men live today on the plane of desires, i.e., on the animal level of consciousness. Very few men live constantly on and act from the plane of pure mind or the reasoning faculty. But there are planes of consciousness that are potential to man. As there is below the level of man's consciousness, the Sub-conscient, so there is above his mental consciousness, Superconscient planes of being. One can arrange these planes in a gradation. The one immediately above the mind may be called, the Higher Mind, above it can be felt the Illumined Mind. Still above it, there is the plane of Intuitive Consciousness. This is the plane where knowledge is by Inspiration and Spontaneous Discrimination and Revelation. Beyond it is the Overmind which is the connecting link between Mind and the full dynamic divine consciousness, Supermind. As one ascends from the mental consciousness to the higher levels of Being, one can experience these faculties operating in him. It is possible for man to rise permanently out of his mental consciousness into these levels. Even today many people receive thoughts, ideas, suggestions and truths intermittently from them. Sri Aurobindo has worked out the whole psychology of the Superconscient as well as of the Sub-conscient and has shown to man the full ladder of his Being, starting from the Inconscient and reaching right up to the Supermind. What I said was that this ladder of ascent to the higher levels of the Being is attainable by man and in his efforts the higher levels

of Being themselves help the ascending human consciousness, i.e., if the human being aspires to rise to the Overmind, then the rays of the Over-mental Consciousness would penetrate into his ascending consciousness and help him to arrive at the Overmind. Similarly, with the immense power of the Supramental Consciousness; for, the Supermind as the dynamic Divine Consciousness would also penetrate and descend into the human consciousness aspiring to reach it, and by the double effort of human aspiration from below and the help from above, man will be able to rise to the Supramental Consciousness. This Supramental Consciousness, being spontaneously truth-conscious, would organise the individual and the collective life of man and cast it in the mould of the Truth, the Divine Will, which is native to the Supermind.

You will thus see that the effort of bringing down the Supermind is not the same as the starting of a religious institution or devoting oneself to a contemplative life. You seem to be labouring under the false impression that the Supermind is something abstract and therefore perhaps ineffective for life. Just the contrary is the truth. Supermind is not only the dynamic Divine Consciousness but, being the spontaneous operation of Knowledge and Will which are self-existent in it, it is spontaneously effective and harmonious. Thus there is no question of encouraging Fatalism or belief in pre-destination.

Q: How do you find, in your ideology, a place for the unity of mankind, when individuals tend to live for themselves in the perfection of their lives, if such is possible, in this world? Such an ideal is unattainable where everybody is involved in economic and political problems, which you cannot possibly do away with.

A: Your question shows that you are confused in your thinking. You seem to turn your eyes only towards the individual and you seem to forget to look at the evolution of the collectivities of mankind. You seem to argue that as individuals live for themselves, unity of the collectivity is not possible. This is not true. For example, in a nation, every individual seems to live for himself. But there is also the life of the nation and the consciousness of the nation so that in the political life, the individual contributes his share to the collective thinking and then obeys the decision of the collectivity. No individual today is or can be completely isolated. He forms a part of some collectivity so that the individual's living his own life is not inconsistent with his feeling of unity with the collectivity.

The second part of your question seems to suffer from the same want of clarity. Because everybody is involved in economic or political problems,

it is not true that the ideal of unity cannot be attained or attempted. In fact, it is while trying to solve the economic and political problems that one has to think and act according to the ideal of human unity. It is, in fact, this want of thinking and acting in terms of the whole that creates and perpetuates conflict between man and man, nation and nation. The more man will learn to think in terms of the whole humanity, the more the conflict will be eliminated and a solution also found. It is precisely in the economic and political field that one should feel most the need of the great ideal.

Q: Is it possible to exclude religion from politics and economics?

A: I think it is possible unless you take religion in the larger sense of an attitude towards life and not in its sectarian or limited sense of an external organisation for the spiritual life of man. So far as humanity to day is concerned, it must be admitted that all states and economic organisations have divested themselves of any religion because they always understand by religion the social organisation of man for the pursuit of his inner life.

There was a time when, in Asia as well as in Europe, politics was founded on or at least influenced strongly by, religion. But it was discovered that the influence of religion in politics tended to cut the freedom of man especially the freedom of thought, belief, and action. Economics had hardly any connection with religion directly and it has grown up today as a purely secular activity. In spite of these conditions prevailing I believe that it is eminently possible for true religion in the sense of a religious attitude to life, to influence politics as well as economics

Q: At what stage do you think ideas will triumph over economic power and military power? For example, a weak State prevailing over a powerful one by mere ideas.

A: The weak State or the powerful State both represent some idea. Mere ideas in the abstract do not and cannot prevail over military or economic power. Generally what happens is that the ideas from the world of mind come down or try to come down into the life of man and, in doing so, they first get widely accepted by large numbers of men and then they try to organise the life of man for their self-expression. In doing so, they come in conflict with the established organisation of old ideas. A conflict issues and it is not the mere economical and political power that wins but the power of the living idea which can go on continuing the struggle constantly organising itself in life till it wins;

so that it is not mere ideas but ideas which men follow, ideas for which men are prepared to lay down their lives that ultimately win. This has happened time and again in human history.

Q: Do you think national interests are likely to be lost in the ideological party conflicts?

A: It depends upon the ideologies of the parties. If the ideology is such that it wants to concern itself with international interests, then it is possible that national interests would not be considered paramount by it. In fact, the time has come in human history when man should see the limitations of national interests and find out how not merely to balance but to harmonise the interests of all nations i.e., of the whole humanity. But if parties are organised on the basis of national interests or for maintaining the sovereignty of the nation only, then even if it eliminates conflict within the nation it is very likely that it will come into conflict with interests of other nations.

Q: You said that the Capitalistic economic system is good; for it gives incentive to producers. Do you not believe that men could be so changed as to hold national interests above personal benefit?

A: I never said that the Capitalistic economic system is good. What I said was that it has its good points. Given the present constitution of man's nature, it would be very difficult to maintain the incentive to progress without the prospect of personal gain and well-being. The second part of your question which is theoretical can be answered in the affirmative in the abstract, i.e., theoretically it is possible to believe that man can be "so changed as to hold national interests above personal benefit". But in actuality, it is found that man does not change willingly in that direction and that he has to be compelled to change in that direction by the machinery of the State. This has been tried in many States where Collectivism is the ideology. Such a compulsion means restriction of the liberty of the individual to think and act freely. Secondly, even in such Collectivist States, it has been found that people who are placed in charge of departments of national interests *do* sink down to the greed of personal gain or aggrandisement.

Q: What is your idea of "Nationalism"? Is it not the obstacle to the human unity you visualise?

A: Nationalism is the most evolved collective consciousness of man. There is behind every nation the true National Soul or the true National Being. But

as the individual who has in him the divine spark, does not express in his actual life that divine spark, but lives and acts in his ego, his desires, his ambitions and selfishness, so also the national consciousness of man hardly except in times of crisis expresses the true national soul. Organised nationalism most often expresses collective greed, collective self-interest and ambition. That is why sovereignty of nations today has been found to be an obstacle to the unity of mankind. It has been found after the two world wars that sovereignty of nations cannot be allowed to be absolute. Some restrictions have to be either self-imposed by the nation upon it or by international organisations like the U.N.O. The true function of the national consciousness would be to make the individual grow out from his ego to the national consciousness and to act as an organic member of the whole human race so as to manifest in its collective life a particular aspect or, if one can say, a personality of the Cosmic Being, the Soul of the Humanity. In that case, it would not be an obstacle to human unity but a means for the manifestation of a particular trend of the Collective Soul of humanity.

Q: The world today recognises the Western civilisation as the standard of Self-Government. Don't you think that in East Africa the other races have to adopt Western culture etc., so as to get recognition before the Europeans and share in Self-Government?

A: Self-Government is attained by national effort. It does not depend upon recognition of Western civilisation. Perhaps what you want to say is that in the world today, Western culture is dominant, and that many nations which are free have to adopt certain elements of the culture of the West. This may be true. It is wrong on our part to dub a certain culture Western and another Eastern. The fact is: man is essentially the same all over the world. But during the course of his historical development, he has evolved certain values in life, attitudes of mind, outlooks etc., which have moulded his social and political institutions and have also produced for him other forms of creative activity. It is not necessary or compulsory for East Africa to adopt Western culture if it finds it undesirable. It may have to adopt what it finds beneficial and useful to its own life. This has to be said because at the end of the last century, it was supposed that the Western culture then developed, which was scientific and materialistic, was the highest culture attained by man. This illusion was supported by the great fact of domination by the Western continent over all the other continents. But the two successive world wars have shattered this illusion not only in the eyes of the other continents but for many intellectual and thinking people in Europe itself. It should be noted here also that the Euro-

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pean culture at the end of the last century was not the same that the Greeks had given it. The culture of Greece which evolved into the modern European culture was different from it in many essentials.

Besides if all the other races adopted Western culture, as, you seem to believe, they must for their political independence, then the world would become rather dull. It is unity in variety which is the source of delight; and if the whole world and all the races in it become uniform and common, it would be perhaps a very dull world and uninteresting. Let it be remembered that Self-Government comes by bringing into front in life the aspiration for Freedom—this is irrespective of race or culture of man.

Q: Does international unity depend on (a) super-intellectualism? or on (b) United Nations Organisation?

A: (b) International unity, or rather the evolution of international unity because it is not yet attained, depends upon the nations feeling the need of it. When I say nations, I mean man in his national consciousness. Such unity always evolves as a result of the psychological feeling of need for it. Man may feel this need either in his soul or he may feel it by pressure of outside circumstances, by fear, as for example by the ravages brought upon mankind by the two world wars. Nature often uses such outer means to evoke in man the necessary psychological need for what she wants to bring into existence. The U.N.O. is a result of this feeling of need for international unity. And now we may say that continuation of this beginning of unity depends upon the existence and success of the working of the U.N.O. But even if the U.N.O. should fail, the need for international unity would continue; and man would have to devise some other machinery or organisation for bringing it about.

(a) As for supra-intellectual factors to which you refer it should really be the Supermind. It must be said that international unity, if attained, would help the descent of the Supramental Truth on earth. And as the Supermind is a dynamic Truth-Consciousness, we would be right in saying that its power or its pressure is making for international unity of mankind.

Q: Is there really evolution of the human mind? Is it not rather retrogressive?

A: Your question whether mind is retrograding seems to be a result of confused thinking. Probably you see the human beings around you full of lower

tendencies and darkness, subjecting themselves to all kinds of lower movements. But from such a near view, it would not be correct to judge about the course of evolution of the human spirit. Even if there is progression, there are intermediate loops of the periods of apparent retrogression. They are in fact part of the whole movement of further progression. Besides, I did not state that mind was progressing on the mental plane. What I said was that evolution of mind to something quite different from mind, the Supermind, was the logical necessity of the process of universal evolution. This process began with the Inconscient and has evolved Matter, Life and Mind and should naturally further evolve the next emergent, the Supermind. One may even say that it is not merely a logical necessity but an inevitability.

Q: What is the Oriental conception of the Origin of Human Society?

A: I do not quite understand your question. So far as the Indian idea is concerned, it is said that the Divine himself is the Cosmic Being, the Universal Purusha. The intellectual people whose spontaneous faculty is to acquire knowledge and disseminate it were considered the head of this Cosmic Being: They are the Brahmins. Those that performed in the body social then function of building power, keeping law and order, protecting the weak, fighting the oppressor and keeping up the upward tendency of the human spirit in society are the Kshatriyas the fighters: they are the arms and hands of the Cosmic Being. The class that produces and distributes wealth is called the Vaishyas, the merchants and they represent the thighs of the Cosmic Being. Those classes in the body social that perform the menial functions and are devoted to manual labour are called the Shudras and they represent the feet of the Universal Being. This is more or less a matter of representing the collective being of man and the social divisions that generally obtain in man's collective life.

But apart from such metaphors, if you want to know the origin and development of human collectivities, I would suggest to you to read Sri Aurobindo's *The Human Cycle*, which traces the development of the social units from the beginning of history to the present day and envisages the lines of their future development towards a spiritual age.

A. B. PURANI.

“MODERN TRENDS”

Address given by Baron Erik Palmstierna, G. C. V. O., of the World Congress of Faiths at the fourth Conference at “Het Oude Loo”—May, 1953.

WHEN we look back across the years our life seems like a rough passage surrounded and framed by eternity.

At present we dwell in an age of great confusion and unrest. Change is its signature. Old values are discarded, traditional beliefs undermined. We grope in the dark for safety, speed carries us away. The furies of discontent, frustration and fear confront us.

Serious questions arise: Are we at the end of a long epoch? Are the change of mental climate and the cross-currents of conflicting views signs that we undergo a period of transition towards something very different from the past? Or have we lost our way, taken the wrong turning of the road, lost our foothold and are slipping downwards? Increasing numbers of thinking people begin to arrest their steps to look around for a refuge. The whole human situation is debated. We live in a state of crisis.

It may be that both questions should be answered in the affirmative, but in this lecture I am concerned only with the last one.

We might well ask what all this hectic strife for material progress, new mechanical inventions and exploitations matter, when no peace secures our lives and an increasing anxiety grips our minds.

We triumphed in vain glory that science made the forces of nature tools in our hands, but have found that they might destroy us as well. The structure of our civilisation can in brief time break down and only leave us the remnants of a yesterday. It dawns upon us slowly, but decisively, that something is fundamentally wrong and causes our restlessness and forces sinister events to happen. We proudly asserted that man has the capacity to rule earth independently and we have drifted far away from contacts with the upholding and controlling Power that conditions the universe of life, and now we see the consequences of our attitude. When we desert the Light, darkness thickens.

We cannot alone govern ourselves. We do not discover the right means in our obscurity. We sink deeper into confusion and of late have even lost the sense to understand each other, although similar terms are used. Doubts pester us and everything looks uncertain.

But how can we retrieve our steps? How can men and women of the modern world discover a safe pathway that leads out of the surrounding obscurity and brings us closer to that Primus Motor which guides the streams of universal life? How can we restore contact with the great Source from which we seem to have alienated ourselves and brought fear to reign in our domain? The question cannot be answered in exactly the same terms as those which were used in the past, because they do not make sense to, or cannot be understood by, the rising generation. The situation is vastly different. We live in a democratic age and the subject has become a citizen, who demands to judge for himself, to build his opinions and conduct of life on gained personal experiences. The voice of authority makes no appeal to him. We have no reason to complain, because in the long run it indicates an advance, a rise of individual status. Traditional conceptions, which remind him of the faith of his forefathers are held in respect, but the dogmatic definitions of the fourth to the sixth centuries have become incomprehensible and antiquated.

We live in the age of science, and empirical methods are applied in most fields of life and everybody asks for proved facts and is unwilling to listen to declarations of beliefs. Beliefs are many and conflicting. It is true that leaders of science have of late conscientiously admitted the limitations which their methods cannot surpass, because the experimenter himself influences the results of his research at delicate experiments. And we are ourselves parts of the world we investigate. But to change the trend of popular thoughts is a slow process and we do not yet see that people at large have recognised the revolutionary change which has set in within the boundaries of the worshipped science.

It was hoped that it should reveal ultimate truth and a frustration of that hope is difficult to accept. Instinctively the empirical methods continue to be used in fields where they are inapplicable.

Thus a modern seeking mind declares: it is not through the many complicated and partly conflicting doctrines nor by any psychological devices and exercises, but through my own endeavours that I wish to pave my way and get hold of the secret that covers my existence. I should be guided by my

own individual experiences and myself prove their authenticity. We have an extraordinary tendency to analyse and use our reason to solve life's problems, and for the business of daily life that is naturally the only possible method. But in respect to the ultimate concerns, matters spiritual, things are different.

It is not mere patterns of thought we need, but life, an inner flow of streaming life that surges into the consciousness and fills the whole being with a certainty that often cannot be intellectually explained. And it would be foolish to assume that a God on high should require the theories of philosophers or the complicated dogmas of theologians to reveal his essence to us human beings. He is far above rationalistic pictures, formulated creeds and definitions we formulate. *Un Dieu défini est un Dieu fini!* Other means than the intellect, those that correspond to the essence of life we seek, should be used!

What we need is a warm touch at the core of our being from radiations that issue from the undefinable Source of life. Truth is life, not an intellectual pattern it is a growing apprehension of reality accompanying the unfolding of the spiritual life. We might never be in a position to apprehend the complete truth, but we can receive sufficient illumination and points of direction, which, followed, admit increasing insight regarding the conditions in high realms.

It becomes evident that the old religious frames are too narrow for modern man. The vastness and gigantic proportions of the whole which recently have been unveiled, transform earlier images of deity to symbols which are indicative, but inadequate. The universe we have discovered is far different from old parochial conceptions.

The vital question then arises whether individual experiences can be gained to assure us that life on earth has a meaning and a purpose. No more important question can be broached and it touches the crucial point in the life of mankind.

For my own part I answer unhesitatingly in the affirmative and would not speak otherwise. Contact with life above is not only a possibility, intended to be established, but it brings a flow of energy to renew life and an unearthly quiet sensation of certitude and serene joy. We need not to be thrown about by currents of contrary opinions, but might get a firm foothold and a knowledge which substitutes beliefs. We can become knowers, not only believers and this is what the modern mind demands.

But what advice could be given to our fellowman in the circumstances? He cannot be offered scientific proofs, because the experience remains outside the boundaries of science, touches the root of man's being where reason has no prior claim but must operate afterwards, translating the experience to our consciousness in intellectually comprehensible descriptions. The only possible advice, it seems to me, is to urge our fellowman to turn inwards, to delve into himself, and try to gain similar experiences.

We might put before him authentic experiences of other men to show that the possibilities are within reach, but more cannot be done. All depends on his own initiative, his willingness and endurance. Some hints may, however, be tendered. Few people lack experiences of odd inner stirrings, impetuous yearnings to get liberated to inhale a breath of purity and to break shackles that tie us to earth. Incidents of this nature may only leave a slight impression at the time, but are remembered, although they might have been brushed aside. Should we listen to those stirrings, they might develop and we hear a voice which is not our own, though connected with our being. It signals a direction. It is no fruit of imagination and it may become so persuasive that our whole life subtly undergoes a change. After an initial period of some length, a period of testing and practice, these experiences get rooted and grow; they are events as real as visible and proved exterior occurrences.

Schools of modern psychology that have understood the irrelevance of physical methods in their field of research have not only discovered—alike with other schools—a vast field of unconsciousness from which our conscious life emerges, but have also detected a component in us which occasionally extends its powers outside the space-time continuum which conditions our life. It is our soul, our true self, which has been resurrected. A soul which pre-existed and which is immortal.

Psychic research has in its investigations reached a point where similar conclusions are shaped. Telepathy and clairvoyance operate unhampered by physical nature and establish contacts which are scientifically unexplained. The soul of man, which materialists deny, has reappeared and causes the inner stirrings and communications. They represent activities of soul-life. Here the means to contact the eternal Life-source evolve.

We have for centuries been convinced that a dualism exists between soul and body, between the mind and the brain. The Cartesian conception has always been embarrassing and incomprehensible, but we are now at the brink

of new vistas. Solid matter, all we touch and see has been transformed to energy of many kinds which are transformable, connected, and constitute a gigantic net-work of magnetic fields and radiations that keeps the universe in working order. And we ourselves are both receivers and senders of rays, incorporated in and taking part of universal life-radiations. And our brain is seen to be one of many transformers of energy, of electrical currents, which connect mind to brain and convey the impression of our senses to the non-physical part. The human being may be conceived as a mind of radiating energy.

The Cartesian gulf has been bridged. Spiritual energy does through the scale of energy-radiations, which permeate everything, act upon what we formerly called solid matter. Our soul is exposed to the radiations and may, when receptive enough, consciously acknowledge them. The Source of all these radiations is embodied in that immense superpersonal field of light and fire we call our God. The anti-thesis: Theism-pantheism is non-existent. Both are true.

The considerations to be drawn from this new outlook are obvious. It is not through any exterior means the desired contacts are initiated, they are switched on within ourselves, and we should be attentive to the events of our inner life. Its gate should be kept open and the entrance to the root of our being be kept pure in order to facilitate communications which transpire to our consciousness from a high level. This is not done through strenuous efforts or mechanical attitudes, on the contrary, detachment, quietude and stillness of thoughts is required and wordless devotion. It might happen at such moments that a soft approach reaches us and we feel distinctly as if we were embraced by a warmth that is entirely recognisable. Subsequently a continued communion might develop, but it depends on our capacity to receive. We should, as Boehme said, "still the wheel of thoughts" and make the brain inactive. The promptings from beyond are, further, of such a swift order that it is not so easy to catch them in their flight. And the quality of the radiations to us needs a degree of moral purity in the receiver.

It may be that in the end the communion develops clairaudiently and a physically soundless conversation begins, not unlike the wordless flashes of intuition. Moments may even occur when, quite unexpectedly, flashes of brilliant, non-physical light embraces us and we feel wrapt up in a spiritual sensation as were we caressed by loving hands.

These are no illusions, an outcome of tension for excitement; the experiences were not pre-meditated, but wholly unexpected and rather startling. I have

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collected a great number of personal records through the ages from many lands and different faiths and they all evidence a similarity which is remarkable. Spiritual life is a reality and expresses its true qualities on such occasions. Thomas Traherne has in beautiful language related his own experience:

“Then did I dwell within a world of light,
Distinct and separate from all men’s sight
Where I did feel strange thoughts and did such vision see,
That were, or seemed, revealed to me...”

Most founders of religions and great religious leaders were originally experiencing incidents of this kind and they gave to them the inspirations which initiated their efforts. And many of those whom we with an unfortunate term call “Mystics” underwent the same kind of experience. The “mystics” are not phenomena of past history and they are with us today.

The strange fact is that on main issues their recordings of the experiences tally, although centuries and continents might have separated them. One cannot avoid the impression that they had touched fringes of the same spiritual Source. Differences of detailed conceptions naturally exist, because we are not mechanised robots, but unique individualities, who reflect the radiations in divergent manners. The outstanding fact is, however, that they, in spite of different cultural upbringings show that essentials have been shared.

For us, who have been brought up in the Christian Tradition, it is naturally easier to understand spiritual truths as given in the Christian forms, but a few years at the World Congress of Faiths has taught us through personal intercourse with believers in other faiths how much we have in common. A faith is no granite-block, but is organic life on varying levels, and it is on the higher levels that the unity becomes apparent. We are one in the conviction regarding eternal life and a divinity, Who is the Love that, in Dante’s words, moves the sun and all the stars.

To sum up: earth is no isolated room in a cold universe where we are left to ourselves. It is embedded in encircling wave-radiations which physically, biologically and spiritually have their effects on human life. The discovery of this all-embracing field of energy makes things look plausible which earlier were unacceptable.

Thus, in spite of the turmoil, unrest and obscurity on earth, rays penetrate

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to us and new vistas open to show the inner unity of all and to render assistance in the fight against the evil, which we for our own sake need to overcome. We might think that we have at present been driven to the end of a blind alley and see no escape. But it is only our self-inflicted lack of vision that prevents us from touching the gate which never was closed. Modern man, who demands experience, is invited to test the pathway which is at hand and thus be brought in sight of the heights.

And should it finally be asked what the positive object of life might be, what lies beyond the negative defence-fight against the agencies of evil, the answer arrives without fail: to join the Divine enterprise, which is the object of universal life, and take part in a general evolution towards constantly higher levels of the beauty and charity that radiate from the undefinable and all-embracing Greatness, which we give so many names, and which is the Source of All.

ERIK PALMSTIerna

THE INTEGRAL YOGA OF SRI AUROBINDO

CHAPTER XVI

KNOWLEDGE — THE LIGHT THAT FULFILLS.

PART I

What is Knowledge

IN yogic parlance and spiritual philosophy knowledge does not mean mental knowledge. Mental knowledge is a knowledge of objects taken as separate integers or aspects and not viewed as indivisible parts of a universal whole. Even when it arrives at a synthesis, it is an aggregate or a sum-total that it grasps, and never the essential unity of things. Besides, the mind can know only the surface of things, their appearances, and not their essential substance and reality. "Mind in its essence is a consciousness which measures, limits, cuts out forms of things from the indivisible whole and contains them as if each were a separate integer. Even with what exists only as obvious parts and fractions, Mind establishes this fiction of its ordinary commerce that they are things with which it can deal separately and not merely as aspects of a whole. . It conceives, perceives, senses things as if rightly cut out from a background or a mass and employs them as fixed units of the material given to it for creation or possession....Mind may divide, multiply, add, subtract, but it cannot get beyond the limits of this mathematics....Mind cannot possess the infinite..."¹

Real knowledge, on the contrary, is knowledge by identity. I cannot really know a person unless I identify myself with him. An observation of his ways of life, his nature and speech and manners and dealings with others, can give me only a superficial idea of him; and it often happens that my idea is found in the end to be erroneous, being based on the misleading data of the senses and an illegitimate use of imagination and conjecture. Tricked by appearances, I sometimes mistake a saint for a scoundrel and a scoundrel for a saint. Many a betrayal in love and friendship can be rightly traced to the

¹ *The Life Divine* by Sri Aurobindo

cheat of the senses. But when I identify myself with a person spiritually, that is to say, when my consciousness becomes one with his consciousness, I know his real nature; not only what is overt and superficially or deceptively evident, but also what is deep down in him, vibrant or latent in his being, and subtly influencing his thoughts and feelings. There is no possibility of error in this identification: for, it gives me a knowledge of the man as he is and not only as he appears to be. In identifying myself with him, I become his self and his nature; the major and minor vibrations of his consciousness rise in my consciousness, and I can easily know them for what they are. The truth behind this knowledge by identity is that existence is one, Being is one, consciousness is one, and when I go down to the all-pervading bedrock consciousness, I become united with any thing and everything that it contains, the depth and range of this identification depending upon the development and power of my own consciousness. The less the dominance of the ego in me the greater the possibility of my union with the world and with God; for, God is my own supreme Self and the world is nothing but His manifestation in Himself in terms of His own multiplicity. Indeed, I can know only myself and nothing else. I can have no knowledge of an object which is fundamentally alien to my nature and consciousness—two disparates having nothing in common between them can never meet; and without such a meeting and contact there can be no knowledge. If contradictories are found to meet and unite in life, it is because fundamentally they are one, meant to act as complementaries in the manifold patterns of Nature. The Upanishads say that the Atman or Self has become all these beings and things (becomings)—Atma abhūt sarvabhūtanī; and, basing their ontology on this truth, they declare that when That is known all is known, tasmin vīgnate sarvamīdam vīgnatam bhavati. And indicating the way to this knowledge by identification, they inculcate a plunge into the depths of our being, away from the confused din of the surface and its trenchant divisions and differences. Not that the appearances are unreal or illusory, but they are passing, transitory and delusive—they do not reveal the indivisible and imperishable Reality that dwells in them. It is only by being avrittachakshu, by turning round our eyes inwards, that we can discover the Guhahitam, the dweller of the cave, the Puranam, the Ancient of days, who has become all this that is, idam sarvam, and is yet beyond them, vahishcha. “The method of Yoga in knowledge must always be a turning of the eye inward, and, so far as it looks upon outer things, a penetrating of the surface appearances to get at the one eternal reality within them.”¹ The core and essence of things and creatures, the basic harmony and unity of their existence, the truth and pur-

¹ *The Synthesis of Yoga* by Sri Aurobindo

pose of their becoming in Time and Space, the meaning of their mutations, and the significance of their interrelation and interaction, all lie beyond the farthest confines of our waking mind and inaccessible to our normal thought and reason. We may, if we like, deny their reality in the overweening pride of our sense-bound mind; but truth cannot be thus denied for ever with impunity. Besides, there is no possibility of a permanent denial; for the same truth shines in the heart of each one of us, and, when the clouds of doubt and denial roll away and the mind learns to perceive its own inherent limitations and its crippling bondage to the superficial aspects of life, is bound to emerge and change the denial into an ardent and grateful acceptance. The incompetent pride of the intellect falls to the ground as the indwelling divinity rises into self-expression.

Sri Aurobindo speaks in "The Life Divine" of a fourfold order of knowledge from which our surface cognition derives. "The original and fundamental way of knowing, native to the occult self in things, is a knowledge by identity; the second, derivative, is a knowledge by direct contact associated at its roots with a secret knowledge by identity or starting from it, but actually separated from its source and therefore powerful but incomplete in its cognition; the third is a knowledge by separation from the object of observation, but still with a direct contact as its support or even a partial identity; the fourth is a complete separative knowledge which relies on a machinery of indirect contact, a knowledge by acquisition which is yet, without being conscious of it, a rendering or bringing up of the contents of a pre-existent inner awareness and knowledge. A knowledge by identity, a knowledge by intimate direct contact, a knowledge by separative direct contact, a wholly separative knowledge by indirect contact are the four cognitive methods of Nature".¹ The last is the normal method of our mind, which is incapable of entering into the objects of its perception and identifying itself with them. Our mind cannot know the external objects in the same way as it knows its own inner movements—its thoughts feelings and sensations—with the same immediacy and intimacy. It contacts the objects through the senses, and in so doing, it meets with only figures, images and representations of them, and not their essential reality. It is this inherent deficiency of the separative knowledge by indirect contact that gives a certain plausibility to the theory of Phenomenalism.² The third method is characterised by a simultaneity of direct contact and separation between the knower and the object of knowledge, sometimes or partially sustained by identity. It is typically

¹ *The Life Divine* by Sri Aurobindo.

² This was also the starting point of the radical transformation Kant's mind underwent in regard to the unknowability of the Thing-in-itself.

illustrated in our knowledge of our own subjective movements, in which there is a direct contact and at the same time a detached observation; but it is the reason that observes the inner workings of the being, and in so observing, it leans more on the side of the workings than on the essential identity, which remains behind as a subtle, supporting awareness. In the second method the direct contact is at once more intimate and effective, and the separation entailed in the observation is not so clear-cut as in the third. There are ample possibilities and even an obvious certainty of error in the fourth method, which pivots upon a trenchant separation between the knower and the object of knowledge. It depends upon the misleading data of the senses, and deals only with the appearances of things. There are possibilities of error even in the second and third methods, but they are fewer, and the chances of arriving at truth much greater. But it is only by the first method, the method of identity, that the truth of a thing can be realised and its knowledge gained. In identity there is a union between the consciousness of the knower and that of the object of knowledge—for there is consciousness, evolved or involved, in every object—and the knower knows his object of knowledge in himself, the barriers of material Space melting away in the spiritual extension of his consciousness. “They see the Self in the Self by the Self”, is the Gita’s description of the highest form of knowledge by identity. So long as there is separation between the knower and the object of his knowledge, the knowledge acquired cannot but be indirect, and what it brings to the knower is not truth but only half-truth or even falsehood.

If we study the lives of the mystics, we come across innumerable instances of the knowledge by identity. Compared with this knowledge, our scientific, psychological and philosophical knowledge appears as pale mental constructions, shaky improvisations of the analytical or speculative intellect, a tenuous network of mere hypotheses. When Christ says, “I and my Father in Heaven are one,” it is his inmost consciousness identifying itself with the infinite Consciousness of the Supreme that expresses the spiritual oneness, and not his philosophic mind or even his intuitive intellect. When Sri Chaitanya enters into the Mahabhava, he feels himself so much identified with the Supreme that he visibly appears divinely transfigured, his normal consciousness of the devotee of God being eclipsed and swallowed up in the all-mastering consciousness of the Supreme Being. Sri Ramakrishna on his mystic journey through the higher planes to the highest transcendence of Sachchidananda identifies himself successively with the planes of Power and Light and Bliss to such an extent that he becomes at the moment of identification nothing but Power or Light or Bliss.

Describing his identification with the plane of universal Power, he says,

“I was so much identified with that (universal) Power that I felt I could tear the sun from its orbit and dash it to atoms.” When he was identified with the plane of Light, he felt as if he was immersed in an ocean of Light—it was Light and Light everywhere. Once when a man was treading over a lawn, Sri Ramakrishna felt in himself the pain of the trampled grass and shrieked in agony. When he saw some of his foremost disciples for the first time, he at once recognised each of them and knew who they had been in their past lives and what they had come for again to the earth. And his predictions about them proved absolutely true. If we turn to the experiences of the Mother as transcribed in her *Prayers and Meditations*, we get graphic descriptions of the knowledge by identity.

“As from a summit which has been attained, one discovers a vast horizon, so, O Lord, when one’s consciousness is identified with this intermediate realm between Thy unity and this manifested world, one participates at once in Thy Infinitude and the realisation of the world. It is as though one were at a centre in which the consciousness, wholly steeped in Thy effective Power, may direct the ray of Thy forces upon the lowest instrument moving centrally amidst its brother instruments. From the height of these transcending regions, the unity of the physical substance is very evidently visible, and yet the body which serves as a particular instrument in the material realm, appears with a special precision and clearness like a more vigorous point in the midst of this whole, at once multiple and unique, in which the forces circulate equally.

“This perception has not left me since yesterday. It has installed itself as something definitive, and all the outer activity which, in appearance, continues as usual, has taken the mechanical character of a marvellously articulated and animated toy moved from the height of its seat by my consciousness which is no longer individual but is still universal, and that means that it is not yet completely immersed in Thy Oneness. All the laws of the individual manifestation clearly appeared to me, but in a manner so synthetic, so global, so simultaneous, that it is impossible to express it in our ordinary language.”¹

It is evident from the above quotation that the Mother is speaking of her experience of that plane of consciousness which is intermediate between the featureless unity of the Divine Existence and the multitudinous flux of the manifested world. The experience is born of identification and it gives her a perfect knowledge of the transcendent Infinitudes above and the universal forms and

¹ *Prayers and Meditations of the Mother*—May 15, 1914.

forces below. Another example will give the most conclusive evidence of the knowledge that is attained by identity:

“My heart has fallen asleep, down to the very depths of my being.”

The whole earth is in a stir and agitation of perpetual change; all life enjoys and suffers, endeavours, struggles, conquers, is destroyed and formed again.

“My heart has fallen asleep down to the very depths of my being.”

In all these innumerable and manifold elements, I am the Will that moves, the Thought that acts, the Force that realises, the Matter that is put in motion.

“My heart has fallen asleep down to the very depths of my being.”

No more personal limits, no more any individual action, no more any separatist concentration creating conflict; nothing but a single and infinite Oneness.

“My heart has fallen asleep down to the very depths of my being.”¹

In this experience the Mother has been completely identified with the material universe, its life and its innumerable and manifold elements. This identification gives her a perfect knowledge of the inner and outer workings of the material world. But that is only a part of the experience. Beyond the material world, she is identified with the Will that moves it, the Thought that acts in it, and the Force that realises. And even beyond all this, she is identified with the fathomless silence of the ineffable Absolute. She commands all knowledge in this integral experience, for she is identified with the One in all the ways of His Being and in all forms of His self-manifestation. She knows at once the essential and the phenomenal truths of existence as truths of her own self and its becomings, for, it is an experience in which “it is not a second or other than and separate from himself that he sees, speaks to, hears, knows.”²

In spiritual life the ultimate aim of knowledge is not mental understanding or enlightenment, but being and becoming. One can know the Brahman only by becoming the Brahman; or, to put it inversely, (which is the same thing), one becomes the Brahman by knowing the Brahman—*Brahmavid Brahmaiva bhavati*. Therefore, it can be said that knowledge begins only when we have

¹ *Prayers and Meditations of the Mother*—April 10, 1917.

² *Brihadaranyaka Upanishad*

passed beyond all mental knowings. So long as we cherish our mental knowledge and depend upon our intelligence and reason and imaginative reflection in our search for Truth, we remain imprisoned in our mental constructions, severed from the Infinite. To transcend the mind is an imperative necessity of our evolution, unless, of course, we elect to describe a downward curve of culture and allow our mental faculties to be employed in the service of our blind desires, and the god-like elements in us to be darkened and disfigured by our animal appetites and passions. There is already a great danger of such a devolution in human culture, which must be obviated before it has undone the labour of the ages. Salvation lies in knowledge—knowledge which is the Light of the Spirit illumining its own Truth. “There is nothing in the world as pure as knowledge,” says the Gita. “Even if thou art the worst of sinners, thou wilt cross over the ocean of sin by the boat of knowledge.” “As a blazing fire consumes a whole heap of wood, so does the fire of knowledge burn up all actions and their consequences.” “Therefore, O Bharata (Arjuna), by the sword of knowledge cut off this doubt of your mind born of ignorance, and bestir yourself to practise Yoga.” When the Light of knowledge shines out in our being, the mask of our mortal humanity drops away from our consciousness, and we realise the infinity and eternity of our essential Self and Spirit. Knowledge delivers us from all bondage and suffering, and ushers us into the freedom and bliss of our spiritual existence. It illumines and widens our love for the Divine, and impeccably guides our action into the channels of a divine fulfilment. Without knowledge love, however intense, would be narrow and fanatical, and our action, however disinterested, would lack the authentic drive of the divine Will in us—it would not be God’s direct action in us. The Light of knowledge is the herald of freedom and the prophecy of divine fulfilment.

We shall now proceed to consider the means, grades and object of knowledge as taught by Sri Aurobindo, and conclude this chapter with an indication of the harmonious fulfilment knowledge is meant to bestow upon the sadhaka of the Integral Yoga.

RISHABHCHAND.

CULTURAL FELLOWSHIP IN MEDIEVAL INDIA

HISTORY to be impartial has to be both correct and comprehensive. Its study of movements and personalities has to be readjusted in the light of latest discoveries. There is much truth in D. R. Bhandarkar's view that history has not done full justice to the early Muslim invaders of India. It is true that they did not, perhaps because they could not, contemplate the extinction of the Hindu race and religion. But the orthodox Muslim historian has extolled them as champions of the Faith and has described their exploits as sacred Jihad. On the other hand, there are Hindu writers who are equally blind to their heroic traits and prefer to dismiss them as mere plunderers.

A readjustment of Indian history is, therefore, called for, especially at the present time when history as a faithful record of the facts of life must not only recognise all sections of the people of the country as the children of the soil, but view them and their deeds against the broad background of one, united and composite nation. We have then to rewrite our history on a clean slate, with clean hands, with a clean purpose, a deeper vision and a broader outlook. Thus treated, history will in the first place vindicate itself and stand in its own true light—the white light of spotless purity; secondly, it will present a living, inspiring and panoramic view of the processes of Nature working out her purpose of a universal synthesis on the very basis of the fundamental oneness of man, allowing the diversities a full play of their respective potentialities, not clashing with but complementing and enriching one another, even behind all surface conflict, clash and shock.

Of the two tendencies that mainly characterise medieval India, its builders and movements, one is towards the establishment of a State, and the other towards the creation of a composite culture, both having their value and significance for the future of the country. In what follows an attempt is made to study these latter tendencies and how they are reflected in the cultural and social movements in medieval India.

An idea of the life of the people of both the communities during the medieval times as also of the efforts on their parts towards mutual cooperation and understanding may be had from their cultural and social activities. Thus while a settled, centralised government or a condition of peace could not be there as a cohesive factor in the collective life of the people, an Arab scholar was committing to memory the rules of Sanskrit grammar; a Hindu king was hear-

ing the Kuran read to him; an Amīr Khusru was giving poetical expression to the love-episode between a Muslim prince and a Hindu princess, and evolving new styles of music out of the Persian and Hindu ones; an Iz-ud-din Khalid Khani was translating into Persian a work on Hindu philosophy; a Hindu architect was drawing designs for a mosque or supervising the construction of one; a Nizam-ud-din Aulia was preaching the Sufi doctrine of love; a Kabir was singing impassioned lyrics on the glory and oneness of God, proclaiming that God is above all religions and that to Him Hindus and Muslims are one; and a philologist was busy devising a technique with which to systematise the new and common language that had already been growing up partly as a matter of course, partly under the stress of necessity.

The story is indeed a romantic one of how this fellowship was taking shape almost in every sphere of Indian life. The Hindu converts did not completely give up their old habits and usages, and their contact with the Muslims produced a syncretisation of the two faiths and rounded off many angularities on both sides. The Hindus took part in Muslim festivities, and were entering the world of Islamic ideas through more and more acquaintance with the Persian and Arabic languages and literatures. The Muslims on their part had begun to show interest in Indian culture long before they started to hold political sway over India. Mention may be made of the Abbasid court's patronage to Hindu scholars, the Buddhistic inclinations of the Barmukis of Bagdad, and of the glowing terms in which the culture and religion of the Hindus were praised by Arabic and Persian scholars like Al-Jahiz (9th century) who said, 'contemplation has originated with the Hindus'; Yaqubi (9th century) who said, 'the Hindus are superior to all other nations in intelligence and thoughtfulness'; Buzurg bin Shahryar (9th century) who said that the Indian Rajahs were particularly well-disposed towards the Muslims and that the Hindu king, Mahrug of Alor in Kashmir, had the Kuran translated into Hindi and used to hear the translation read to him every day; Al-Idrisi (10th century) who said 'the Hindus are by nature inclined to justice'; and Al-Beruni (11th century) who 'studied Sanskrit diligently and was fascinated by the philosophy of the Bhagavat Gita and the Upanishads'. He as also many Arabic scholars came to India in search of knowledge of the philosophy and sciences of the Hindus. Al-Beruni's work in India was characterised by Sachau as 'a magic island of quiet and impartial research in the midst of a world of clashing swords, burning towns and plundered temples.' For his encyclopaedic knowledge, the Hindus gave Al-Beruni the title of 'Vidyasagar' (the ocean of learning). Many early Sufi teachers in India were well versed in Indian thought, and to them may be traced the unmistakable influence of Vedanta and Buddhism on the Sufi doctrines.

The study of Sanskrit by the Muslims may be said to have begun almost immediately they came into contact with India. Many Muslim scholars visited the country after the invasion of Sindh by Muhammad ibn-Kasim. One of them wrote the first history of Sindh, and another its first geography. In order to know the country and its culture more thoroughly, they learnt Sanskrit through which alone could such knowledge be had. They translated into Arabic a number of Sanskrit works including the astronomical treatise *Brihaspati Siddhanta* and the scientific writings of Arya Bhatta. On the other hand, Mirza Raja Sawai Jai Singh, himself a keen student of astronomy, had a number of Arabic works in astronomy rendered into Sanskrit. The Arabic version of *Panchatantra* is attributed to the Sanskrit-knowing Arab scholars. In India some of the Muslim scholars got many Sanskrit texts translated into Persian, and Akbar was the greatest among these patrons of learning.

Muslim inscriptions written in Sanskrit have been discovered in Gujarat. They are written in a manner which reveals the profound admiration of the Muslims for Hindu culture. The Somnath Patan inscription (13th century) recording the building of a mosque is a celebrated instance. It begins with the following peculiar invocation according to the Hindu fashion; *Om Namah, Sri Visvanathaya Namaste, Viavarupaya namaste.* (Om, Adoration to holy Visvanath. Adoration to Thee who art the Lord of the Universe, adoration to Thee whose form is the universe). The inscription mentions the then ruling Hindu king of Gujarat with all his titles, and pays a reverent tribute to the chief Hindu priest of Somnath. It also says that the Muslims in one of the holiest places of the Hindus, Somnath Patan, received warm support from the local Hindus in building a mosque and endowing a property for its maintenance. Thus Mahmud's brutal depredations on the temple of Somnath two hundred hundred years ago did not affect the Hindu spirit of toleration and generosity towards the Muslims. And the Muslims also did not hesitate to write such an important inscription in nothing but purely Sanskrit terms.

Sandesa Rasaka is a work of the Muslim poet Abdul Rahaman of the 12th century. It is written in Apabhramsa, the current popular speech of western India, derived from Sanskrit. In *Rasaka* the celebrated Muslim poet shows his deep understanding of and respect for Hindu life and culture then prevalent in Mulasthan (modern Multan). Its poetical excellence attracted two Jain monk-scholars and inspired them to write commentaries on it in Sanskrit. Zain-ul Abidin (15th century), the king of Kashmir, who looked equally to the welfare of his Hindu and Muslim subjects, extended his patronage to the poets and writers of both the communities. He was as much interested in the study of Sanskrit as he was in Persian. He commissioned the Hindu

pundit Jona Raja and the Muslim scholar Mullah Ahmad to bring down to his day the famous *Rajatarangim* of Kalhana; the former did it in the original Sanskrit and the latter in Persian. The saintly character of Abdin led to a popular belief among the Hindus that he was the reincarnation of a Hindu ascetic.

The interest of Hindu scholars in Arabic and Persian is no less remarkable. It is possible that this started in Bengal and the Punjab earlier than in other parts of northern India, in Bengal because the Pathan and the Afghan rulers there did not take long to adjust themselves to the country. Rupa and Sanatan, before they became the companions of Sri Chaitanya, belonging to his inner circle, held responsible offices in the court of Sultan Hussain Shah of Bengal. The former was in charge of the literary department and the latter was the Chief Minister of the Sultan. Both of them were erudite scholars in Arabic and Persian as well as in Sanskrit. They had an intimate knowledge of the teachings of the Prophet and composed notable works in Persian. In the North, particularly during the Mughal rule when Persian had already established itself as the language of the court, it was more and more widely cultivated. In western India Nandalal Munshi, Bhagavandas, Ranchhodi Amarni are some of the noted Hindu writers in Persian. Lalla Ded, the well-known literary celebrity of Kashmir, combined in herself both Sanskrit and Persian cultures. She was regarded as a link between the classical Sanskrit traditions of the past and the Persian poetic patterns of the more recent times. Munshi Bhawanī Das Kachru, the eminent Hindu poet of Kashmir, evolved the new style of the *Bahar-i-Tavil* in Persian poetry. Teba Ram (Betab) is still remembered for his *Jang Namah* which is considered by some to stand on a par with *Shah Namah* of Firdausi.

The early Sufi teachers in India proved a great unifying force in the common collective life of both the communities. Theirs was the Path of Love which would lead the seeker to the All-Pervading One, the centre and source of all existence. Large numbers, Hindus and Muslims, followed their teachings. Al Jullawī (11th century) was the first preceptor of Sufism in India. His tomb in Lahore is a place of pilgrimage for Hindus and Muslims. Mumuddin Chisti (12th century) had his seat in Delhi and later in Pushkar in Ajmer. His *dargah* attracts a constant stream of Hindu and Muslim pilgrims from various parts of the surrounding country. Music and dancing as in Hindu temples are a remarkable feature of this Sufi shrine. The Husainī brahmanas of Pushkar are descendants of his disciples. They are neither orthodox Hindus nor orthodox Muslims. They say, 'We are brahmanas, our scripture is the Atharva Veda in which Hindu and Muhammedan doctrines have been synthesised.' Priests or *kakas* of the Imamshahi sect are something like the Husaini brahmanas.

Members of the Shahadulla sect also invoke the authority of the Atharva Veda. Bīn-Sir or the beheaded saint was no other than Shah Inayat who, because of his sympathies for the Hindus, was killed by the fanatical Muslim princes of Sindh. The Muslim devotee Baba Fattur of Kangra owed his spiritual life to the Hindu saint Gulab Sing. The followers of the *Piran Panth* of Gujarat have Hindu names, observe all Hindu customs except that their dead are buried with Islamic rites and that they are disciples of a Muslim guru. The inspired saints of medieval India, like Kabir, Nanak, Dadu, Ravidas and Rajjab, had immense influence over members of both the communities. Indeed, there was no difficulty in the way of a Muslim to be a member of Dadu's Brahma Society. It is these mystics that built up a new kind of religious fellowship during medieval times, and their work must be given the highest place in the cultural history of the period.

In other spheres also the intercourse between Hindus and Muslims was taking its own shape. Sikander Lodi had a Sanskrit text on medicine translated into Persian. Once when a pious Muslim protested against an order of his that no Hindu should be allowed to use the bathing ghats of Mathura opposite to which he had erected mosques, the Sultan drawing his sword in rage cried, 'Wretch, do you maintain the truth of Hindu religion?' 'By no means,' replied the brave man, 'I speak according to the law. Kings should not persecute their subjects on any account.' This answer, says Ferishta, pacified the Sultan. During his reign, according to the same authority, the Hindus began to learn Persian and study Islamic literature. Besides, there was then beginning to grow a common political consciousness among Hindus and Muslims, as evident from the instances of both the communities fighting together a common enemy.

Ratan Singh of Chitor and Bahadur Shah of Gujarat assisted the Rajputs of Malwa against the Afghan Sultan Mahmud. When the fort of Batmur, a Rajput stronghold, was laid siege to by Timur, Hindus and Muslims fought side by side and perished together in the *jauhar* which terminated the struggle. Mahmud II, the last Sultan of Malwa, was under a deep obligation to the Rajput nobleman, Medini Rao, for his invaluable assistance in securing his succession to the throne when many Muslim nobles had espoused the cause of Mahmud's elder brother. In recognition of his services, Mahmud appointed Medini Rao to the office of a minister with the result that Rajput influence became predominant in his court. It was due to the gallant defence of his Rajput body-guard under the command of the Raja of Dankula that Ahmad Shah of Gujarat was able to escape when Hushang of Malwa made a sudden night attack on him and surrounded the royal pavilion. Rana Sanga of Mewar had many Muslim allies when he fought Babar in the famous battle of Khanwah.

Nor were these activities confined only to Delhi or its environs. In Bengal there

was a perceptively growing tendency between both the communities to come closer to each other almost in every walk of life. The Muslim rulers were keen on having Hindu ministers; and marriages between Hindus and Muslims were not rare. Sultan Shamsuddin's *mka* (widow remarriage in Islam) with the Hindu widow Fulmati who exercised great influence in administrative matters, and the marriage of the two sons of the highly respectable brahmana Raja of Ektakia with the daughters of Sultan Husain Shah are not surely solitary cases of the Hindu-Muslim intermingling of blood. There are abundant instances of Hindu or Muslim saints having followers in both the communities, and of Hindus fighting for Muslim rulers. There were sects which included both Hindu and Muslim members. Sahajiya Vaishnavism had in its fold Hindus, Muslims and, later, even Christians. Pagal Nathi and Gobra sects also recognised no difference between races and castes and had, besides Hindus of all castes, hundreds of Muslims as their members; and occasions were not rare when they were led and guided by Muslims or Hindus of low birth. So also were the other sects like Khusi Viswasi, Ramaballabhi, Jagamohini, Balarami, Neda or the shaven, Aul-Vaul-Darbes-Sain, Samyogki, in each of which Hindus and Muslims were regarded as members of a common spiritual fellowship. They did not believe in castes or sects, temples or images, and were, to a certain extent, influenced by Islam, though originally they were derived from the esoteric schools of Buddhism, Tantrikism, or the Vaishnavic schools of Hinduism. Of these sects the most influential was the Sahajiya one founded by Baba Aul. Members of it, both men and women, were required to go through a course of mystic but extremely strict inner discipline which is held to be almost without parallel in the spiritual history of mankind.

Thus was evolving in medieval Bengal a spiritual synthesis of a unique kind which was not without its bearing on the future of the country. Many of these sects exist even to this day. There were folk-forms of religious worship, such as, *Satya-Pir*,¹ *Manik-Pir*, *Kalu-Ghazi*, *Olat-Chandi*, *Tmlakh-Pir*, *Neda-Pir*, which were equally popular among both the communities. *Satya-Pir*, with which Husain Shah's name is associated as the originator, has the largest number of worshippers almost in every part of Bengal. Even today it is a common deity of both Hindus and Muslims. The feeling of fellowship between the two communities so deepened that 'many a Mohamedan offered puja at Hindu temples, as Hindus offered *simu* at Mohammedan mosques.' And this they continued up to about two decades ago.

¹ *Satya* is a Sanskrit word for truth and *Pir* is an Arabic equivalent for the Hindu conception of *Guru*, the Master. The consecrated food at this religious ceremony is called not by the Hindu name *prasad* but by the Muslim name of *simu* which is derived from the Persian word *sireen* meaning sweet.

(to be continued)

SISIRKUMAR MITRA.

Students' Section

THE SRI AUROBINDO INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY

THE COMMENCEMENT OF THE FIRST TERM

ON the 10th of December, 1953, started the first study-year of the International University Centre established in Sri Aurobindo's name. There had been a notice put up, announcing the subjects of study: Psychology, General Philosophy (Indian and Western), Sri Aurobindo's Philosophy, History of English Literature, English Literature in General (Prose and Poetry), Sociology, International Relations, History of Science, Mathematics, etc. Most of the subjects were so tempting that it was difficult for us to select from them, especially as all the professors had taken extra pains to make the courses both comprehensive and lucid.

After coming to Pondicherry at a very young age I had little regular and systematic learning. So there were great apprehensions in my mind as to how, in spite of the professors' pains, I should be able to cope with these high studies. But I was sure of the Mother's and Sri Aurobindo's grace. I ventured and chose Psychology and History of English Literature, as well as the Sunday "Extension Lectures" in Sri Aurobindo's Philosophy and the History of Western Philosophy.

On the appointed day my fellow-students and I gathered in the class-room selected for the lectures in Psychology. All had happy faces as if they too, like me, were looking forward to an intellectual feast. Exactly at 8 am. our professor Dr. Indra Sen, a Ph. D. of Berlin, entered.

Dr. Sen started the class in such a natural and spontaneous way that he hardly looked like a modern University lecturer. And yet he was most impressive. He spoke slowly and distinctly. He must have prepared some points but the lecture was evidently *ex tempore*. And yet he was steadily fluent. At the same time not a word did he utter which was superfluous or out of place.

MOTHER INDIA

The moment the Lecture started I felt a spiritual atmosphere in the room. We were sitting in the very room in which the Mother herself had been holding for several years, her French classes.

The difficult subject of Psychology was started with a piece of chalk? And from that chalk-piece we were carried right to the problem of our Soul.

The entire lecture was delivered in quite a familiar tone. We listened to each word with interest and ease. The same can be said of the other lectures given either on that day or on other days by Dr. Sen's colleagues. And from all the lectures the students came away with a sense of profound truths kindled in their minds, and that is as it should be, for the aim of the Sri Aurobindo University is not only to cover a wide range of knowledge but also to touch everywhere the subtle depths of significance by which knowledge is lit up with wisdom and the intellectual finds root in the spiritual.

A₁STUDENT

SINCERITY

(SADHAK: *I am sorry X has gone away.
He had such extraordinary powers.*)

“A sincere heart is worth all the
extraordinary powers in the world.”

ˆSRI AUBOBINDO

ON THE HUMAN PERSONALITY

(An Essay by a student of the First Year Class in Psychology—based on the first six lectures)

WHEN we speak of a man's personality we generally mean by it those special marks or traits of his being by which we can distinguish him from other individuals. But this is a very incomplete and insufficient definition, because even by those special marks or traits we can at the most get only a superficial view of his outer personality, which is utterly insignificant compared to the greater many-sided personality that lies concealed behind it. It is not very easy to define or analyse these hidden parts and planes which constitute a man's real being and which contribute more or less towards his total development, his thought, feeling, willing and action, for man is a very complex being. His surface personality is composed of a strange admixture of quite different impulses and tendencies, each going its own way; this creates confusion and discord in him. Sri Aurobindo writes: "But we do not see the origination or the course of these impulsions; we are aware only of their confused and pell-mell results on the surface upon which we can at best impose nothing better than a precarious shifting order". So then, it will be necessary to explore the hidden realm of human personality to acquire a thorough knowledge of its structure and operations.

From the psychological standpoint, the being of man can be said to be composed of various elements—there is the mind, the vital or the life-force, and the physical. These three together form the ego of man, that which he calls "I". This ego has no separate existence of its own. Its function in Nature is only to aid in centralising and giving a shape to man's outer consciousness and being. Man, naturally, identifies himself with his ego only and is quite oblivious of his inner or true being. So generally, by human personality we mean the ego-personality. But this is only the most external and superficial part of his total being; there are regions of consciousness concealed behind it.

Now, each part of his being, the mental, the vital and the physical has its own proper functions, quite independent of the rest in their source, but working

together in an incoherent fashion in the outer being. The mind is concerned with thoughts, perceptions and ideas. It has different movements too—lower as well as higher. The vital is the life-nature, and is the seat of desires, passions and feelings, of ambition, anger, fear, greed as well as of various energies of action. The physical too, has its functions, its most material part being the body. The body too is not without its own consciousness—the obscure consciousness of the cells, tissues, glands, etc. We know much of the functions and processes of these from the sciences; nevertheless, this knowledge is incomplete without the knowledge that Yoga gives of subtle physical processes. On the surface nature all these different planes of consciousness are jumbled together interpenetrating each other. So there is the mental mixed with the vital, the vital mixed with the physical, and so on, forming a vital mind, a physical mind, a vital-physical etc. We shall discuss these later. Each of these elements has its peculiar characteristics. On the surface nature there is a haphazard mixture. By drawing back behind this outer nature, by a method of self-analysis,—not by intellectual introspection but by becoming inwardly conscious—man can know of the separate and quite distinct existence of the different parts of his being, the ranges of consciousness which direct and shape his surface nature and form his outer personality; this will give him a greater understanding of their respective functions. On all the levels of a man's being there is an outer and an inner consciousness.

Behind his normal consciousness man has a subliminal region in which he can become aware of his inner mental, inner vital and inner or subtle-physical being,—(Manomaya Purusha, Pranamaya Purusha and Annamaya Purusha respectively). This inner being is the true personality; the ego is only its outer projection. The inner mind, vital and physical are wide and free, whereas their outer projection is narrow, ignorant and bounded. In his inner being and nature there is always a poise and balance and harmony.

All around the individual is the plane of Cosmic or Universal Consciousness and Energy; this is the storehouse of all energies. Universal Nature also has three planes corresponding to the three parts in man—the Mental, the Vital and the Physical; each plane, again, has different worlds in it. "The subliminal mind in us is open to the universal Knowledge of the cosmic Mind, the subliminal life in us to the universal force of the cosmic Life, the subliminal physical in us to the universal force-formation of cosmic Matter," we are told by Sri Aurobindo. From the inner being the outer personality takes and manifests according to the capacity of the ego.

The inner being of man is supported from behind by the psychic entity

which is a direct spark of the Divine. We may say that the central being of man has two aspects—the Jivatman or spirit which is self-existent and above the manifestation, and the psychic being or *Chaitya Purusha* which is in the evolutionary manifestation. The psychic being can be said to be the representative or the deputy of the Jivatman in the manifested world. At first there is only a spark-soul; as it evolves it puts forth from itself a psychic being. This soul-being or psychic being grows from life to life and carries the evolution of the whole person along with it. It survives through birth and death. It can guide and influence and finally change the outer personality. When this happens, the personality can be said to be psychised. “It is the psychic personality in us that flowers as the saint, the sage, the seer; when it reaches its full strength, it turns the being towards the Knowledge of Self and the Divine, towards the supreme Truth, the supreme Good, the supreme Beauty, Love and Bliss, the divine heights and largenesses and opens us to the touch of spiritual sympathy, universality, oneness”

Besides these planes, man has a superconscious range above, which is really a higher consciousness; it opens his being and nature towards greater and loftier possibilities and supports them. He has also a subconscious range below, a ‘concealed and unexpressed inarticulate consciousness’; it carries within it all the impressions of man’s past habits and experiences and from there throws them up to the surface, usually in dreams. When a thing is rejected from the other parts of a man’s being it goes down or sinks into the subconscious and can surge up even after a long lapse of time. The rejected element may be thrown out into the environmental consciousness also, a consciousness surrounding an individual and through which he is in contact with the cosmic forces. Still below the subconscious region there lies the vast stretch of the Inconscious which can be said to be the ‘nether origin’ of man.

So properly speaking a man has several personalities in him,—the outer personality consisting of the mental-vital-physical ego, the inner personality, and the psychic, his true immortal personality behind the frontal consciousness.

The spiritual personality, at present superconscious to his normal self, has still to be made an active part of his being. This is a very general statement—a deeper analysis will be taken up later.

MANJU SEN

MY BOYHOOD UNDER SRI AUROBINDO

THE PSYCHIC BEING

(Continued from the previous issue)

24-9-1933

SELF: What happens to the heart in the process of the Integral Yoga? Is it purified in itself?

SRI AUROBINDO: Yes, it becomes an instrument of self-expression of the psychic being.

25-9-1933

SELF: Before it becomes the instrument of the psychic, what does it follow?

SRI AUROBINDO: The vital—the heart is the centre of the emotional being and the emotions are vital movements. When the heart is purified, the vital emotions change into psychic feelings or else psychicised vital movements.

26-9-1933

SELF: Sometimes we feel pure and true emotions surging out from us. Are they not directly from the psychic being? For how could the unpurified heart produce anything pure and true?

SRI AUROBINDO: Pure and true thoughts and emotions and impulsions can rise from the human mind, heart and vital, because all is not evil there. The heart may be unpurified but that does not mean that everything in it is impure.

MY BOYHOOD UNDER SRI AUROBINDO

7-10-1933

SELF: Is not our psychic being in itself surrendered to the Divine?

SRI AUROBINDO: It has to be surrendered consciously and with more and more knowledge. The psychic aspires to the Divine or answers to things divine, it is surrendered in principle, but it has to develop its surrender in detail carrying with it the surrender of all the being.

9-10-1933

SELF: Is it not true that unless each of our parts—mind, vital and physical—aspires for transformation there cannot be a total surrender?

SRI AUROBINDO: Yes.

13-10-1933

SELF: Does not your answer mean that all our being must come under the psychic influence and obey it?

SRI AUROBINDO: Yes.

20-10-1933

SELF. Does the psychic aspire through the mind only?

SRI AUROBINDO. Why should it aspire through the mind only?

22-10-1933

SELF. Because the mind has a greater purity and openness to the Divine than the vital and the physical.

SRI AUROBINDO. The psychic can aspire from itself. It can aspire through the vital and the physical also.

24-10-1933

SELF. When the mind, vital and physical are not awakened, how does the psychic manifest its influence on the material plane?

SRI AUROBINDO. You do not seem to have understood my answer at all. In the ordinary consciousness in which the mind etc. are *not* awakened the psychic acts as well as it can through them, but according to the laws of the Ignorance.

MOTHER INDIA

28-10-1933

SELF. When the psychic aspires, how can one become conscious of it?

SRI AUROBINDO. If one is in contact with one's soul, one is conscious.

16-11-1933

SELF. This evening I saw young D doing Pranams to your photograph and then prostrating himself before it. Is it not rather supernatural for such a little boy to do it?

SRI AUROBINDO. There is nothing that can be called supernatural. There are children in whom the psychic is already awake.

21-11-1933

SELF. In which part of the mind is the memory of everything stored up?

SRI AUROBINDO. It is not in the mind alone; it is stored in the subconscient (mind, vital and physical) as impressions—also in the inner being all is present but held back as a store of past experience.

24-11-1933

SELF. I was looking at the Mother while She was distributing garlands to other sadhaks. A great wave of love burst forth from my heart when She was smiling at the people. Then tears came to my eyes. It was a happy condition.

SRI AUROBINDO. If it is tears of love or joy, then they are usually from the psychic being.

25-11-1933

SELF. Are the tears necessary when such deeper emotions surge out from us?

SRI AUROBINDO. No. But they are helpful very often.

5-12-1933

SELF. In the evolution, the animal is at a lower stage than man. How then do we find, sometimes, dogs and horses so faithful and skilful that even for a human being it would be difficult to act like them?

MY BOYHOOD UNDER SRI AUROBINDO

SRI AUROBINDO. Faithful yes—but how skilful, except in the special connection of dogs and horses? These are faithful because of the psychic part in them, but in mind they are inferior.

SELF. Does not the psychic consist of a centre as well as a plane?

SRI AUROBINDO. Yes.

7-12-1933

SELF. It is said that the soul and the Atman are not one and the same: there is a difference. How do you distinguish them?

SRI AUROBINDO. The Atman is one in all, is not born, does not evolve or change.

The soul is something that comes from the Divine into the evolution and as the psychic being it evolves and assumes different personalities from life to life.

9-12-1933

SELF. You said, “The Atman is one in all, is not born, does not evolve or change.” In that case, is there any difference between the Atman and the Divine?

SRI AUROBINDO. The Divine is more than the Atman. It is Nature also, It contains everything in Itself.

10-12-1933

SELF. Does the soul coming from the Divine enter into this universe from the very beginning or after the evolution of animal life?

SRI AUROBINDO. The soul is there from the beginning as a spark of the Divine. It grows and takes form as the psychic being in the course of the evolution.

SELF. Is it the psychic being which makes the inner being surrender itself to the Divine?

SRI AUROBINDO. Yes.

NAGIN DOSHI.

POEMS

HE CAME

The stream of stars flowed down the milky-way
Into the vastness that is the temple of God.
Under its white shadow amazed I lay
Sullied with sod.

Slowly the heavens opened before my eyes,
My heart was lit with myriad flames of love.
And slowly ceased the night's low anguish cries,
She looked above.

Then through the dark-blue doors of heaven He came,
Through silver clouds and quiet regions of sleep.
He was an image of beauty, a sun-pure flame,
Joy without grief.

Softly He came through the calm moon-lit hush
And gently on the half-bloomed flowers trod;
And, stood silent beside me on the grass,
My golden God.

RANAJIT.

THE ABSOLUTE

No mind, no form, I only exist;
Now ceased all will and thought;
A final end of Nature's dance,
I am It whom I have sought.

A realm of bliss ultimate, bare;
Beyond both knower and known;
A rest immense I enjoy at last;
I face the One alone.

I have known the secret ways of life;
I have become god-soul;
The Truth immutable is revealed;
I am the way, the goal.

My spirit aware of all the heights,
I am mute in the core of Sun.
I barter nothing with time and deeds;
My cosmic play is done.

CHINMOY.

UNCONQUERABLE

Reft am I from rapture now!
Darkness threatens me:
All around I feel the high
Throes of agony.

Lost am I in night immense,
Light I see here none,
Save those coiling memories—
Bright days swiftly gone.

Still my ardent passions seek
For Thy mighty love,
Still my soul in flaming joy
Yearns to leap above

Matter's sordid ignorance.
I still cry and sing
For Thy heaven's golden dawn
That Thy grace shall bring!...

I am no more dupe of time,
Space can tie me not:
I know that Thy victory
Shall at length be wrought.

PRITHWINDRA.