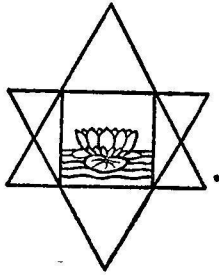


# MOTHER INDIA

OCTOBER, 1954

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

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

SRI AUROBINDO

\* \* \*

*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

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*"Great is Truth and it shall prevail"*

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### CONTENTS

	<i>Page</i>
ILION: BOOK IV - THE BOOK OF PARTINGS ... <i>Sri Aurobindo</i>	... 1
THE SECRET OF THE VEDA: SELECTED HYMNS - TO BHAGA SAVITRI, THE ENJOYER - COMMENTARY ... <i>Sri Aurobindo</i>	... 12
SADHANA WITH THE MOTHER: VOIDNESS—A BEGINNING OF SELF-REALISATION ... <i>Nagin Doshi</i>	... 17
THE INTEGRAL YOGA OF SRI AUROBINDO: CHAP. XVIII - THE INTEGRAL TRANSFORMATION PART III: THE THREE STEPS OF TRANSFORMATION <i>Rishabhchand</i>	... 20
MATTER AND LIFE: A SCRUTINY OF SCIENTIFIC OPINIONS . . . <i>K. D. Sethna</i>	... 29
NEW ROADS: BOOK III ... <i>Norman Dowsett</i>	... 41
DEFEAT OF THE "I" (Poem) ... <i>Sailen</i>	... 45
BOOKS IN THE BALANCE: REVIEW OF "LORCA: by ROY CAMPBELL" ... <i>P. L. Stephen</i>	... 46

### Students' Section

THE MOTHER'S TALKS: DIVINE DISGUST ... <i>Nolini Kanta Gupta</i>	... 48
MY BOYHOOD UNDER SRI AUROBINDO: DREAMS ... <i>Nagin Doshi</i>	... 50
POEMS: GIVE ME WINGS ... <i>Ranajit</i>	... 53
THE MOTHER ... <i>Chinmoy</i>	... 54
THE PROMISE ... <i>Prithwindra</i>	... 55

# ILION

SRI AUROBINDO

## BOOK IV — THE BOOK OF PARTINGS

*(Continued from the previous issue)*

THUS while they conversed now in this hour that was near to their parting  
Last upon earth, a fleet-footed slave girl came to the chamber;  
“Paris, thy father and mother desire thee; there in the strangers’  
Outer hall Aeneas and Halamus wait for thy coming.”  
So with the Argive he wended to Priam’s ample chamber  
Far in Laomedon’s house where Troy looked upwards to Ida.  
Priam and Hecuba there, the ancient grey-haired rulers  
Waiting him sat in their chairs of ivory calm in their greatness;  
Hid in her robes at their feet lay Cassandra crouched from her visions.  
“Since, O my father,” said Paris, “thy thoughts have been with me, thy blessing  
Surely shall help me today in my strife with the strength of Achilles.  
Surely the gods shall obey in the end the might of our spirits,  
[Pallas and Hera, flame-sandalled Artemis, Zeus and Apollo.]  
Ever serve the immortal brightnesses man when he stands up  
Firm with his will uplifted a steadfast flame towards the heavens,  
Ares works in his heart and Hephaestus burns in his labour.”  
Priam replied to his son; “Forewilled by the gods, Alexander,  
All things happen on earth and yet we must strive who are mortals.  
Knowing all vain, yet we strive; for our nature seizing us always  
Drives like the flock that is herded and urged towards shambles or pasture.  
So have the gods fashioned these tools of their action and pleasure;  
Failure and grief are their engines no less than the might of the victor;  
They in the blow descend and resist in the sobs of the smitten.  
Such are their goads that I too must walk in the paths that are common,  
Even I who know must send for thee, moved by Cassandra.  
Speak, O my child, since Apollo has willed it, once, and be silent.”  
But in her raiment hidden Cassandra answered her father;  
“No, for my heart has changed since I cried for him, vexed by Apollo.

## MOTHER INDIA

Why should I speak? For who will believe me in Troy? who believed me  
Ever in Troy or the world? Event and disaster approve me  
Only, my comrades, not men in their thoughts, not my brothers and kinsmen.  
All by their hopes are gladly deceived and grow wroth with the warner,  
Half-blind prophets of hope entertained by the gods in the mortal!  
Wiser blind, if nothing they saw or only the darkness.  
I too once hoped when Apollo pursued me with love in his temple,  
Round me already there gleamed the ray of the vision prophetic,  
Thrill of that rapture I felt and the joy of the god in his seeing,  
Nor did I know that the knowledge of mortals is bound unto blindness.  
Either only they walk mid the coloured dreams of the senses  
Treading the greenness of earth and deeming the touch of things real,  
Or if they see, by the curse of the gods their sight into falsehood  
Easily turns and leads them more stumbling astray than the sightless.  
So are we either blind in a darkness or dazzled by seeing.  
Thus have the gods protected their purpose and baffled the sages;  
Over the face of the Truth their shield of gold is extended.  
But I deemed otherwise, urged by the Dreadful One, he who sits always  
Veiled in us fighting the gods whom he uses. I cried to Apollo  
'Give me thy vision sheer, not such as thou givst to thy prophets,  
Troubled though luminous; clear be the vision and ruthless to error,  
Far-darting god who art veiled by the sun and by death thou art shielded.  
Then I shall know that thou lovest.' He gave, alarmed and reluctant,  
Driven by Fate and his heart; but I mocked him, I broke from my promise;  
Courage fatal helping my heart to its ruin with laughter.  
Always now I remember his face that grew tranquil and ruthless,  
Hear the voice divine and implacable; 'Since thou deceivest  
Even the gods and thou hast not feared to lie to Apollo,  
Speak shalt thou henceforth only truth, but none shall believe thee:  
Scorned in thy words, rejected yet more for their bitter fulfilment,  
Scourged by the gods thou must speak though thy sick heart yearns to be silent.  
For in this play thou hast dared to play with the masters of heaven,  
Girl, it is thou who hast lost; thy voice is mine and thy bosom.'  
Since then all I foreknow; therefore anguish is mine for my portion:  
Since then all whom I love must perish slain by my loving.  
Even of that I denied him, violent force shall bereave me  
Grasped mid the flames of my city and shouts of her merciless victors."  
But to Cassandra answered gently the voice of her brother;  
"Sister of mine, afflicted and seized by the dreadful Apollo,  
All whose eyes can pierce that curtain, gaze into dimness;

## ILION

This they have glimpsed and that they imagine deceived by their natures  
Seeing the forms in their hearts of dreadful things and of joyous;  
As in the darkness our eyes are deceived by shadows uncertain,  
Such is their sight who read the veil that the dire gods have woven.  
Busy our hearts are weaving thoughts and images always;  
After their kind they see what here we call truth. So thy nature  
Tender and loving, plagued by this war and its fear for thy loved ones,  
Sees calamity everywhere; when the event like the vision  
Seems, as in every war the beloved must fall and the cherished,  
Then the heart cries, 'It has happened as all shall happen I mourn for.'  
All that was bright it misses and only seizes on sorrow.  
Dear, on the brightness look and if thou must prophesy, tell us  
Rather of great Pelides slain by my spear in the onset."  
But with a voice of grief the sister answered her brother;  
"Yes, he shall fall and his slayer too shall perish and Troy with his slayer."  
But in his spirit rejoicing Paris answered Cassandra;  
"Let but this word come true; for the rest, the gods shall avert it.  
Look once more, O Cassandra, and comfort the heart of thy mother,  
See, O seer, my safe return with the spoils of Achilles."  
And with a voice of grief the sister answered her brother;  
"Thou shalt return for thy hour while Troy yet stands in the sunshine."  
But in his spirit exultant Paris seizing the omen,  
"Hearst thou, my father, my mother? She who still prophesied evil  
Now perceives of our night this dawning. Yet is it grievous,  
Since through a heart that we love must be pieced the heart of Achilles.  
Fate, with this evil satisfied, turn in the end from Troya.  
Bless me, my father, and thou, O Hecuba, mother long-patient,  
Still forgive that thy children have fallen for Helen and Paris."  
Tenderly yearning his mother drew him towards her and murmured;  
"All for thy hyacinth curls was forgiven even from childhood  
And for thy sunlit looks, O wonder of charm, O Paris.  
Paris, my son, though Troy must fall, thy mother forgives thee,  
Blessing the gods who have lent thee to me for a while in their sunshine.  
Theirs are fate and result, but ours is the joy of our children;  
Even the griefs are dear that come from their hands while they love us.  
Fight and slay Achilles, the murderer dire of thy brothers;  
Venging Hector return, my son, to the clasp of thy mother."  
But in his calm august to Paris Priam the monarch,  
"Victor so mightst thou come, so gladden the heart of thy mother."  
Then to the aged father of Paris Helen the Argive

## MOTHER INDIA

Bright and immortal and sad like a star that grows near to the dawning  
And on its pale companions looks who now fade from its vision:

“Me too pardon and love, my parents, even Helen,  
Cause of all bane and all death; but I came from the gods for this ruin  
Born as a torch for the burning of empires, cursed with this beauty.  
Nor have I known a father’s embrace, a mother’s caresses,  
But to the distant gods I was born and nursed as an alien  
Here by earth from fear, not affection, compelled by the thunders.  
Two are her monstrous births, from the furies and from the immortals;  
Either touching mortality suffers and bears not the contact.  
I have been both, a monster of doom and a portent of beauty.”

Slowly Priam the monarch answered to Argive Helen;

“That which thou art the gods have made thee; thou couldst not be other:  
That which thou didst, the gods have done; thou couldst not prevent them.  
Who here shall blame or whom shall he pardon? Should not my people  
Rail at me murmuring, ‘Priam has lost what his fathers had gathered;  
Cursed is this king by heaven and cursed who are born as his subjects’?  
Masked the high gods act; the doer is hid by his working.  
Each of us bears his punishment, fruit of a seed that’s forgotten;  
Each of us curses his neighbour protecting his heart with illusions:  
Therefore like children we blame each other and hate and are angry.  
Take, my child, the joy of the sunshine won by thy beauty.

I who lodge on this earth as an alien bound by the body,  
Wearing my sorrow even as I wear the imperial purple,  
Praise yet the gods for my days that have seen thee at last in my ending.  
Fitle Troy may cease having gazed on thy beauty, O Helen.”

He became silent, he ceased from words. But Paris and Helen  
Lightly went forth and gladly; pursuing their footsteps the mother,  
Mother once of Troilus, mother once of Hector,  
Stood at the door with her death in her eyes, nor returned from her yearning,  
But as one after a vanishing sunbeam gazes in prison,  
Gazed down the corridors after him, long who had passed from her vision.

Then in the silent chamber Cassandra seized by Apollo  
Staggered erect and tossing her snow-white arms of affliction  
Cried to the heavens in her pain; for the fierce god tortured her bosom:  
“Woe is me, woe for the guile and the-bitter gift of Apollo!  
Woe, thrice woe, for my birth in Troy and the lineage of Teucer!  
So do you deal, O gods, with those who have served you and laboured,  
Those who have borne for your sake the evil burden of greatness.  
Blessed is he who holds mattock in hand or who bends o’er the furrow

## ILION

Taking no thought for the good of mankind, with no yearnings for knowledge.  
Woe unto me for my wisdom which none shall value nor hearken!  
Woe unto thee, O King, for thy strength which shall not deliver!  
Better the eye that is sealed, more blest is the spirit that's feeble.  
Vainly your hopes with iron Necessity struggle, O mortals.  
Virtue shall lie in her pangs, for the gods have need of her torture;  
Sin shall be scourged, though her deeds were compelled by the gods in their  
anger.

None shall avail in the end, the coward shall die and the hero.  
Troy shall fall in her sin and her virtues shall not protect her;  
Argos shall grow by her crimes till the gods shall destroy her for ever.  
Now have I fruit of thy love, O Loxias, dreadful Apollo.  
Woe is me, woe for the flame that approaches the house of my fathers!  
Woe is me, woe for the hand of Ajax laid on my tresses!  
Woe, thrice woe to him who shall ravish and him who shall cherish!  
Woe for the ships that shall bound too swift o'er the azure Aegean!  
Woe for thy splendid shambles of hell, O Argive Mycenae!  
Woe for the evil spouse and the house accursed of Atreus!"  
So with her voice of the swan she clanged out doom on the peoples,  
Over the palace of Priam and over the armed nation  
Marching resolved to the war in the pride of its centuries conquered,  
Centuries slain by a single day of the anger of heaven.  
Dim to the thoughts like a vision of Hades the luminous chamber  
Grew; in his ivory chair King Priam sat like a shadow  
Throned mid the ghosts of departed kings and forgotten empires.

But in his valiance careless and blithe the Priamid hastened  
Seeking the pillared megaron wide where Deiphobus armoured  
Waited his coming forth with the warlike chiefs of the Trojans  
Now as he passed by the halls of the women, the chambers that harboured  
Daughters and wives of King Priam and wives of his sons and their playmates,  
Niches of joy that were peopled with murmurs and sweet-tongued laughs,  
Troubled like trees with their birds in a morning of sun and of shadow  
Where in some garden of kings one walks with his heart in the sunshine,  
Out from her door where she stood for him waiting Polyxena started,  
Seized his hand and looked in his face and spoke to her brother.  
Then not even the brilliant strength of Paris availed him;  
Joyless he turned his face from her eyes of beauty and sorrow.  
"So is it come, the hour that I feared, and thou goest, O Paris,  
Armed with the strength of Fate to strike at my heart in the battle;  
For he is doomed and thou and I, a victim to Hades.

## MOTHER INDIA

This thou preferrest and neither thy father could move nor thy mother  
Burning with Troy in their palace, nor could thy country persuade thee,  
Nor dost thou care for thy sister's happiness pierced by thy arrows.  
Will she remember it all, my sister Helen, in Argos  
Passing tranquil days with her husband, bright Menelaus,  
Holding her child on her knees? But we shall lie joyless in Hades."  
Paris replied; "O my sister Polyxena, blame me not wholly.  
We by the gods are ensnared; for the pitiless white Aphrodite  
Doing her will with us both compels this. Helpless our hearts are  
And when she drives perforce must love, for death or for gladness:  
Weighed in unequal scales she deals them to one or another.  
Happy who holding his love can go down into bottomless Hades."  
But to her brother replied in her anguish the daughter of Priam;  
"Evilly deal with thy days the immortals happy in heaven;  
Yes, I accuse the gods and I curse them who heed not our sorrow.  
This they have done with me, forcing my heart to the love of a foeman,  
One whose terrible hands have been stained with the blood of my brothers.  
This now they do, they have taken the two whom I love beyond heaven,  
Brother and husband, and drive to the fight to be slain by each other.  
Nay, go thou forth; for thou canst not help it, nor I, nor can Helen.  
Since I must die as a pageant to satisfy Zeus and his daughter,  
Since now my heart must be borne as a victim bleeding to please them,  
So let it be, let me deck myself and be bright for the altar."  
Into her chamber she turned with her great eyes blind, unregarding;  
He for a moment stood, then passed to the megaron slowly;  
Dim was the light in his eyes and clouded his glorious beauty.

Meanwhile armed in the palace of Priam Penthesilea.  
Near her her captains silent and mighty stood, from the Orient  
Distant clouds of war, Surabdas and iron Surenas,  
Pharatus planned like the hills, Somaranes, Valarus, Tauron,  
High-crested Sumalus, Arithon, Sambas and Artavoruxes.  
There too the princes of Phrygian Troya gathered for counsel  
And with them Eurys came, Polydamas' son, who most dearly  
Loved was of all the Trojan boys by the glorious virgin.  
She from her arming stayed to caress his curls and to chide him:  
"Eurys, forgotten of grace, dost thou gad like a stray in the city  
Eager to mix with the armoured men and the chariots gliding?  
High on the roofs wouldst thou watch the swaying speck that is battle?  
Better to aim with the dart or seek with thy kind the palaestra;  
So wilt thou sooner be part of this greatness rather than straining

Yearn from afar to the distance that veils the deeds of the mighty."<sup>1</sup>  
 But with an anxious lure in his smile on her Eurus answered;  
 "Not that remoteness to see have I come to the palace of Priam  
 Leaving the house of my fathers, but for the spear and the breast-piece.  
 Hast thou not promised me long I shall fight in thy car with Achilles?"  
 Doubtful he eyed her, a lion's cub at play in his beauty,  
 And mid the heroes who heard him laughter arose for a moment,  
 Yet with a sympathy stirred; they remembered the days of their childhood,  
 Thinking<sup>1</sup> of Troy still mighty, life in its rose-touched dawning  
 When they had longed for the clash of the fight and the burden of armour.  
 Glad, with the pride of the lioness watching her cub in the desert,—  
 Couchant she lies with her paws before her and joys in his gambols,  
 Over the prey as he frisks and is careless,—answered the virgin:  
 "Younger than thou in my nation have mounted the steed and the war-car.  
 Eurus, arm; from under my shield thou shalt gaze at the Pthian,  
 Reaching my shafts for the cast from the rim of my car in the battle  
 Handle perhaps the spear that shall smite down the Pthian Achilles.  
 What sayst thou, Halamus? Were not such prowess a perfect beginning  
 Worthy Polydamas' son and the warlike house of Antenor?"  
 Halamus started and smiting his hand on the grief of his bosom  
 Sombre replied and threatened with Fate the high-hearted virgin.  
 "Virgin armipotent, wherefore mockst thou thy friend, though unwitting?  
 Nay,—for the world will know at the end and my death cannot hide it,—  
 Slain by a father's curse we fight who are kin to Antenor.  
 Take not the boy in thy car, lest the Furies, Penthesilea,  
 Aim through the shield and the shielder to wreak the curse of the grandsire.  
 They will not turn nor repent for thy strength nor his delicate beauty."  
 Swiftly to Halamus answered the high-crested strength of the virgin:  
 "Curses leave lightly the lips when the soul of a man is in anger  
 Even as blessings easily crowd round the head that is cherished.  
 Yet have I never seen that a curse has sharpened a spear-point;  
 Never Death has drawn<sup>2</sup> back from the doomed by the power of a blessing.  
 Valour and skill and chance are Fate and the gods and the furies.  
 Give me the boy; a hero shall come back formed from the onset."  
 "Do as thou wilt," replied Halamus, "Fate shall guard or shall end him".  
 Then to the boy delighted and smiling-eyed and exultant  
 Cried with her voice like the call of heaven's bugles Penthesilea:<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Alternative: "Thought".

<sup>2</sup> Alternative to "has drawn": "drew".

<sup>3</sup> Alternative: "Cried with her voice like the call of heaven's bugles waking the heroes  
 Blown by the lips of gold-haired Valkyries, Penthesilea;"



## MOTHER INDIA

“Go, find the spear, gird the sword, don the cuirass, child of the mighty.  
Armed when thou standest on the plain of the Xanthus, field of thy fathers,  
See that thou fight on this day like the comrade of Penthesilea.  
Bud of a hero, gaze unalarmed in the eyes of Achilles.”

Light as a hound released he ran to the hall of the armour  
Where were the shields of the mighty, the arms of the mansion of Teucer;  
There from the house-thralls he wrung the greaves and the cuirass and helmet  
Troilus wore, the wonderful boy who, ere ripened his prowess,  
Conquered the Greeks and drove to the ships and fought with Achilles.  
These on his boyish limbs he donned and ran back exulting  
Bearing spears and a sword and rejoiced in the clank on his armour.

Meanwhile Deiphobus, head of the mellay, moved by Aeneas  
Opened the doors of their warlike debate to the strength of the virgin:  
“Well do I hope that our courage outwearying every opponent  
Triumph shall lift to her ancient seat on the Pergaman turrets;  
Clouds from Zeus come and pass; his sunshine eternal survives them.  
Yet we are few in the fight and armoured nations besiege us.  
Surging on Troy today a numberless foe well-captured  
Hardly pushed back in shock after shock with the Myrmidon numbers  
Swelled returns; they fight with a hope that broken refashion  
Helpful skies and a man now leads them who conquers and slaughters,  
One of the sons of the gods and armed by the gods for the struggle.  
We unhelped save by Ares stern and the mystic Apollo  
And but as mortals striving with stubborn mortal courage,  
Hated and scorned and alone in the world by the nations rejected,  
Fight with the gods and mankind and Achilles and numbers against us,  
Keeping our country from death in this bitter hour of her fortunes.  
Therefore have prudence and hardihood severed contending our counsels  
Whether far out to fight on the seaward plain with the Argives  
Or behind Xanthus the river impetuous friendly to Troya.  
This my brother approves and the son of Antenor advises,  
Prudent masters of war who prepare by defence their aggression.  
But for myself from rashness I seek a more far-seeing wisdom,  
Not behind vain defences choosing a tardy destruction,  
Rather as Zeus with his spear of the lightning and chariot of tempest  
Scatters and chases the heavy mass of the clouds through the heavens,  
So would I hunt the Greeks through the plains to their lair by the Ocean,  
Straight at the throat of my foeman so would I leap in the battle.  
Swiftly to smite at the foe is prudence for armies outnumbered.”  
Then to the Dardanid answered the high-crested Penthesilea:

## ILION

“There where I find my foe I will fight him, whether by Xanthus  
Or at the fosse of the ships where they crouch behind bulwarks for shelter,  
Or if they dare by Scamander the higher marching on Troya.”  
Sternly approved her the Trojan, “So should they fight who would triumph  
Meeting the foe ere he moves in his will to the clash of encounter.”  
But with his careless laughter the brilliant Priamid Paris;  
“Joy of the battle, joy of the tempest, joy of the gamble  
Mated are in thy blood, O virgin, daughter of Ares,  
Thou like the deathless wouldst have us combat, us who are human?  
Come, let the gods do their will with us, Ares let lead and his daughter!  
Always the blood is wiser and knows what is hid from the thinker.  
Life and treasure and fame to cast on the wings of a moment,  
Fiercer joy than this the gods have not given to mortals.”  
Highly to Paris answered the virgin armipotent Penthesilea,  
“Paris and Halamus, shafts of the war-god, fear not for Troya.  
Not as a vaunt do I speak it, you gods who stern-thoughted watch us,  
But in my vision of strength and the soul that is seated within me,  
Not while I live and war shall the host of the Myrmidon fighters  
Forcing the currents, lave as once they were wont, in Scamander  
Vaunting their victor car-wheels red with the blood of the vanquished.  
Then when I lie by some war-god slain on the fields of the Troad,  
Fight again if you will behind high-banked fast-flowing Xanthus.”  
Halamus answered her, “Never so by my will would I battle  
Flinging Troy as a stake on the doubtful diceboard of Ares.  
But you have willed it and so let it be; yet hearken my counsel.  
Massed in the fight let us aim the storm of our spears at one greatness,  
Mighty Pelides’ head who gives victory still to the Argives.  
Easy the Greeks to destroy if Achilles once slain on the Troad,  
But if the Peleid lives the fire shall yet finish with Troya.  
Join then Orestes’ speed to the stubborn might of Aeneas,  
Paris’ fatal shafts and the missiles of Penthesilea.  
Others meanwhile a puissant screen of our bravest and strongest  
Fighting shall hold back Pylos and Argolis, Crete and the Locrian.  
Thou, Deiphobus, front the bronze-clad stern Diomedes,  
I with Polydamas’ spear will dare to restrain and discourage  
Ajax’ feet though they yearn for pursuit and are hungry for swiftness,  
Knot of retreat behind let some strong experienced captain  
Stand with our younger levies guarding the fords of the Xanthus,  
Fortify the wavering line and dawn as fresh strength on the wearied.  
Then if the fierce gods prevail we shall perish not driven like cattle

## MOTHER INDIA

Over the plains, but draw back sternly and slowly to Troya.”  
Answered the Priamid, “Wise is thy counsel, branch of Antenor.  
Chaff are the southern Achaïans, only the hardihood Hellene,  
Only the savage speed of the Locrian rescues their legions.  
Marshal we so the field. Stand, Halamus, covering Xanthus,  
Helping our need when the foe press hard on the Ilian fighters.  
Paris, my brother, thou with our masses aid the Eoan.  
I with Aeneas’ single spear am enough for the Argive.”  
“Gladlier,” Halamus cried, “would I fight in the front with the Locrian!  
This too let be as you will; for one is the glory and service  
Fighting in front or guarding behind the fate of our country.”

So in their thoughts they ordered battle. Meanwhile Eurus  
Gleaming returned and the room grew glad with the light of his armour.  
Glad were its conscious walls of that vision of boyhood and valour;  
Gods of the household sighed and smiled at his courage and beauty,  
They who had seen so many pass over their floors and return not  
Hasting to battle, the fair and the mighty, the curled and the grizzled,  
All of them treading one path like the conscious masks of one pageant  
Winding past through the glare of a light to the shadows<sup>1</sup> beyond them.  
But on her captains proudly smiling Penthesilea  
Seized him and cried aloud, her wild and warlike nature  
Moved by the mother’s heart that the woman loses not ever.  
“Who then shall fear for the fate of Troy when such are her children?  
Verily, Eurus, yearning has seized me to meet thee in battle  
Rather than Locrian Ajax, rather than Pthian Achilles.  
There acquiring a deathless fame I would make thee my captive,  
Greedy and glad who feel as a lioness eyeing her booty.  
Nay, I can never leave thee behind, my delicate Trojan,  
But, when this war ends, will bear thee away to the hills of my country  
And, as a robber might, with my captive glad and unwilling  
Bring thee a perfect gift to my sisters Ditis and Anna.  
Eurus, there in my land thou shalt look on such hills as thy vision  
Gazed not on yet, with their craggy tops besieging Cronon.  
Sheeted in virgin white and chilling his feet with their vastness.  
Thou shalt rejoice in our wooded peaks and our fruit-bearing valleys,  
Lakes of Elysium dreaming and wide and rivers of wonder.  
All day long thou shall glide between mystic woodlands in silence  
Broken only by call of the birds and the plashing of waters.

<sup>1</sup> Alternative : “darkness”.

## ILION

There shalt thou see, O Eurus, the childhood of Penthesilea,  
There shalt repose in my father's house and walk in the gardens  
Green where I played at the ball with my sisters Ditis and Anna."  
Musing she ceased, but if any god had touched her with prescience  
Bidding her think for the last time now of the haunts of her childhood  
Gazing in her soul with a parting love at the thought of her sisters  
And of the lovely and distant land where she played through her summers,  
Brief was the touch; for she changed at once and only of triumph  
Dreamed and only yearned in her heart for the shock of Achilles.

So they passed from the halls of Priam fated and lofty,  
Halls where the air seemed sobbing yet with the cry of Cassandra;  
Clad in their brilliant armour, bright in their beauty and courage,  
Sons of the passing demigods, they to their latest battle  
Down the ancestral hill of the Pergamans, moved to the gateway  
Loud with an endless march, with a tireless gliding to meet them  
All Troy streamed from her streets and her palaces armed for the combat;  
Then to the voice of Deiphobus clanging high o'er the rumour  
Wide the portals swung that shall close on a blood-red evening,  
Slow, foreboding, reluctant, and through the yawn of the gateway  
Drove with a cry her steeds the virgin Penthesilea  
Calling aloud, "O steeds of my east, we drive to Achilles."  
Blithe in the car behind her Eurus scouted around him  
Scared with his eyes lest Antenor his grandsire should rise in the gateway,  
Hardly believing his fate that led him safe through the portals.  
After her trampled and crashed the ranks of her orient fighters.  
Paris next with his hosts came brilliant, gold on his armour,

*(The manuscript of this Book ends here abruptly)*

SRI AUROBINDO

# THE SECRET OF THE VEDA

SRI AUROBINDO

SELECTED HYMNS

TO BHAGA SAVITRI, THE ENJOYER

*Rig Veda V. 82*

1. Of Savitri divine we embrace that enjoying, that which is the best, rightly disposes all, reaches the goal, even Bhaga's, we hold by the thought.
2. For of him no pleasure in things can they diminish, for too self-victorious is it, nor the self-empire of this Enjoyer.
3. 'Tis he that sends forth the delights on the giver, the god who is the bringer forth of things; that varied richness of his enjoyment we seek.
4. Today, O divine Producer, send forth on us fruitful felicity, dismiss what belongs to the evil dream.
5. All evils, O divine Producer, dismiss; what is good, that send forth on us.
6. Blameless for infinite being in the outpouring of the divine Producer, we hold by the thought all things of delight.
7. The universal godhead and master of being we accept into ourselves by perfect words today, the Producer whose production is of the truth—
8. He who goes in front of both this day and night never faltering, placing rightly his thought, the divine Producer—
9. He who by the rhythm makes heard of the knowledge all births and produces them, the divine Producer.

## COMMENTARY

Four great deities constantly appear in the Veda as closely allied in their nature and in their action, Varuna, Mitra, Bhaga, Aryaman. Varuna and Mitra are continually coupled together in the thoughts of the Rishis; sometimes a trio appears together, Varuna, Mitra and Bhaga or Varuna, Mitra and Aryaman. Separate *suktas* addressed to any of these godheads are comparatively rare, although there are some important hymns of which Varuna is the deity. But the

Riks in which their names occur, whether in hymns to other gods or in invocations to the All-gods, the Visve Devah, are by no means inconsiderable in number.

These four deities are, according to Sayana, solar powers, Varuna negatively as lord of the night, Mitra positively as lord of the day, Bhaga and Aryaman as names of the Sun. We need not attach much importance to these particular identifications, but it is certain that a solar character attaches to all the four. In them that peculiar feature of the Vedic gods, their essential oneness even in the play of their different personalities and functions, comes prominently to light. Not only are the four closely associated among themselves, but they seem to partake of each other's nature and attributes, and all are evidently emanations of Surya Savitri, the divine being in his creative and illuminative solar form.

Surya Savitri is the Creator. According to the Truth of things, in the terms of the Ritam, the worlds are brought forth from the divine consciousness, from Aditi, goddess of infinite being, mother of the gods, the indivisible consciousness, the Light that cannot be impaired imaged by the mystic Cow that cannot be slain. In that creation, Varuna and Mitra, Aryaman and Bhaga are four effective Puissances. Varuna represents the principle of pure and wide being, Sat in Sachchidananda; Aryaman represents the light of the divine consciousness working as Force; Mitra representing light and knowledge, using the principle of Ananda for creation, is Love maintaining the law of harmony, Bhaga represents Ananda as the creative enjoyment; he takes the delight of the creation, takes the delight of all that is created. It is the Maya, the formative wisdom of Varuna, of Mitra that disposes multitudinously the light of Aditi brought by the Dawn to manifest the worlds.

In their psychological function these four gods represent the same principles working in the human mind, in the human temperament. They build up in man the different planes of his being and mould them ultimately into the terms and the forms of the divine Truth. Especially Mitra and Varuna are continually described as holding firm the law of their action, increasing the Truth, touching the Truth and by the Truth enjoying its vastness of divine will or its great and uncontracted sacrificial action. Varuna represents largeness, right and purity; everything that deviates from the right, from the purity recoils from his being and strikes the offender as the punishment of sin. So long as man does not attain to the largeness of Varuna's Truth, he is bound to the posts of the world-sacrifice by the triple bonds of mind, life and body as a victim and is not free as a possessor and enjoyer. Therefore we have frequently the prayer to be delivered from the noose of Varuna, from the wrath of this offended purity. Mitra is on the other hand the most beloved of the gods; he binds all together by the fixities of his harmony, by the successive lustrous seats of Love fulfilling itself in the order of

things, *Mitrasya dhamabhih*. His name, Mitra, which means also friend, is constantly used with a play upon the double sense; it is as Mitra, because Mitra dwells in all, that the other gods become the friends of man. Aryaman appears in the Veda with but little distinctness of personality, for the references to him are brief. The functions of Bhaga are outlined more clearly and are the same in the cosmos and in man.

In this hymn of Syavaswa to Savitri we see both the functions of Bhaga and his oneness with Surya Savitri; for it is to the creative Lord of Truth that the hymn is addressed, to Surya, but to Surya specifically in his form as Bhaga, as the Lord of Enjoyment. The word *bhaga* means enjoyment or the enjoyer and that this sense is the one held especially appropriate to the divine name, Bhaga, is emphasised by the use of *bhojanam*, *bhâga*, *saubhagam* in the verses of the hymn. Savitri, we have seen, means Creator, but especially in the sense of producing, emitting from the unmanifest and bringing out into the manifest. Throughout the hymn there is a constant dwelling upon this root-sense of the word which it is impossible to render adequately in a translation. In the very first verse there is a covert play of the kind; for *bhojanam* means both enjoyment and food and it is intended to be conveyed that the "enjoyment of Savitri" is Soma, from the same root *su*, to produce, press out, distil, Soma, the food of divine beings, the supreme distilling, highest production of the great Producer. What the Rishi seeks is the enjoyment in all created things of the immortal and immortalising Ananda.

It is this Ananda which is that enjoyment of the divine Producer, of Surya Savitri, the supreme result of the Truth; for Truth is followed as the path to the divine beatitude. This Ananda is the highest, the best enjoyment. It disposes all aright; for once the Ananda, the divine delight in all things is attained, it sets right all the distortions, all the evil of the world. It carries man through to the goal. If by the truth and right of things we arrive at the Ananda, by the Ananda also we can arrive at the right and truth of things. It is to the divine Creator in the name and form of Bhaga that this human capacity for the divine and right enjoyment of all things belongs. When he is embraced by the human mind and heart and vital forces and physical being, when this divine form is received into himself by man, then the Ananda of the world manifests itself.

Nothing can limit, nothing can diminish, neither god nor demon, friend nor enemy, event nor sensation, whatever pleasure this divine Enjoyer takes in things, in whatever vessel or object of his enjoyment. For nothing can diminish or hedge in or hurt his luminous self-empire, *swarajyam*, his perfect possession of himself in infinite being, infinite delight and the vastnesses of the order of the Truth,

Therefore it is he that brings the seven delights, *sapta ratna*, to the giver of of the sacrifice. He looses them forth on us; for they are all there in the world as in the divine being, in ourselves also, and have only to be loosed forth on our outer consciousness. The rich and varied amplitude of this sevenfold delight, perfect on all the planes of our being, is the bhâga, enjoyment or portion of Bhaga Savitri in the completed sacrifice, and it is that varied wealth which the Rishi seeks for himself and his fellows in the sacrifice by the acceptance of the divine Enjoyer.

Shyavasva then calls on Bhaga Savitri to vouchsafe to him even today a felicity not barren, but full of the fruits of activity, rich in the offspring of the soul, *prajavat saubhagam*. Ananda is creative, it is *jana*, the delight that gives birth to life and world; only let the things loosed forth on us be of the creation conceived in the terms of the truth and let all that belongs to the falsehood, to the evil dream created by the ignorance of the divine Truth, *duhswapnyam*, be dismissed, dispelled away from our conscious being.

In the next verse he makes clearer the sense of *duhswapnyam*. What he desires to be dispelled is all evil, *visva duritani*. *Suvitam* and *duritam* in the Veda mean literally right going and wrong going. *Suvitam* is truth of thought and action, *duritam* error or stumbling, sin and perversion. *Suvitam* is happy going, felicity, the path of Ananda; *duritam* is calamity, suffering, all ill result of error and ill doing. All that is evil, *visva duritani*, belongs to the evil dream that has to be turned away from us. *Bhaga* sends to us instead all that is good, —*bhadram*, good in the sense of felicity, the auspicious things of the divine enjoying, the happiness of the right activity, the right creation.

For, in the creation of Bhaga Savitri, in his perfect and faultless sacrifice, —there is a double sense in the word *sava*, “loosing forth”, used of the creation, and the sacrifice, the libation of the Soma,—men stand absolved from sin and blame by the Ananda, *anagaso*, blameless in the sight of Aditi, fit for the undivided and infinite consciousness of the liberated soul. The Ananda owing to that freedom is capable of being in them universal. They are able to hold by their thought all things of the delight, *visva vamani*; for in the *dm*, the understanding that holds and arranges, there is right arrangement of the world, perception of right relation, right purpose, right use, right fulfilment, the divine and blissful intention in all things.

It is the universal Divine, the master of the Sat, from whom all things are created in the terms of the truth, *satyam*, that the sacrificers today by means of the sacred mantras seek to accept into themselves under the name of Bhaga Savitri. It is the creator whose creation is the Truth, whose sacrifice is the outpouring of the truth through the outpouring of his own Ananda, his divine and unerring joy of being, into the human soul. He as Surya Savitri, master



of the Truth, goes in front of both this Night and this Dawn, of the manifest consciousness and the unmanifest, the waking being and the subconscious and superconscious whose interaction creates all our experiences; and in his motion he neglects nothing, is never unheeding, never falters. He goes in front of both bringing out of the night of the subconscious the divine Light, turning into the beams of that Light the uncertain or distorted reflections of the conscient, and always the thought is rightly placed. The source of all error is misapplication, wrong placing of truth, wrong arrangement, wrong relation, wrong positing in time and place, object and order. But in the Master of Truth there is no such error, no such stumbling, no such wrong placing.

Surya Savitri, who is Bhaga, stands between the Infinite and the created worlds within us and without. All things that have to be born in the creative consciousness he receives into the Vijnana; there he puts it into its right place in the divine rhythm by the knowledge that listens and receives the Word as it descends and so he looses it forth into the movement of things, *asrayayati slokena pra cha suvati*. When in us each creation of the active Ananda, the *prajavat saubhagam*, comes thus out of the unmanifest, received and heard rightly of the knowledge in the faultless rhythm of things, then is our creation that of Bhaga Savitri, and all the births of that creation, our children, our offspring, *praja, apatyam*, are things of the delight, *visva vâmâni*. This is the accomplishment of Bhaga in man, his full portion of the world-sacrifice.

## SADHANA WITH THE MOTHER

### VOIDNESS—A BEGINNING OF SELF-REALISATION

SADHAKA: In the afternoons I feel a voidness in the consciousness. It increases greatly during the general evening Meditation. This voidness is a new thing for me. Kindly explain it.

SRI AUROBINDO: The voidness (if by that you mean silence and emptiness of thoughts, movements etc.) is the basic condition into which the higher consciousness can flow. (28-8-1934)

SADHAKA: This morning and evening my consciousness was silent and receptive as usual; it received the Mother's grace and at the same time felt a voidness. That is, there was no movement, inner or outer.

SRI AUROBINDO: The voidness is the best condition for a full receptivity. (29-8-1934)

SADHAKA: Day before yesterday I was returning from the Pranam. The thrill of the Mother's touch had filled my being with joy and love. On the way I met X. I just happened to touch her with a note-book I had with me. I do not know yet what made me do it, especially when I am not in the habit of touching anybody.

I spoke about this to my friend H. He said, "You were so full of love and joy—probably psychic—that something in you wanted to share it with her without making it known to the mind."

Afterwards I asked X about the result of the touch. She replied, "Before you touched me I was in a state of depression but afterwards I experienced happiness."

Was it not a mistake to touch her instead of remaining withdrawn in myself?

SRI AUROBINDO: Certainly it is better not to touch. As it happened it had a good effect, but if the happiness has to flow out to another, it can be done without touch. (30-8-1934)

SADHAKA: What made me touch her? I never dreamt of sharing anything of this kind with anybody. Moreover, how can one share a thing that came as an act of grace from the Mother and did not belong to him in a personal sense?

MOTHER INDIA

SRI AUROBINDO: It was probably an automatic movement of the vital consciousness—There is a tendency in the vital to connect with others and participate. (30-8-1934)

SADHAKA: On the same day, my friend N's pain in the toe began to decrease. Also, there entered a similar pain into the corresponding toe of mine. Is it not rather interesting?

SRI AUROBINDO: Yes, but that kind of experience should not be pushed too far.

SADHAKA: I would like to know how I got N's pain. Either it was consciously transferred to me or it naturally entered into me.

SRI AUROBINDO: Naturally entered. When there is the development of the Self-realisation or of the cosmic consciousness or if there is the emptiness which is the preliminary condition for these things, there comes an automatic tendency for a unity with all—their affections, mental, vital, physical may easily touch. One has to keep oneself free.

SADHAKA: What is the meaning of the word "affections" used by you here?

SRI AUROBINDO: "Affections" here has not the ordinary sense—it means "ways in which they are affected by things e.g. joy, grief, pleasure, pain, illness etc." (30-8-1934)

SADHAKA: Today also the same emptiness continues. How is one to reconcile these two notions—"You cannot feel emptiness unless you are full, and you cannot experience fullness if you are not void."

SRI AUROBINDO: The void is a condition for the fullness coming, in that sense the last part is true. I do not quite understand the other. Perhaps it is true in the sense that what seems emptiness is often a fullness of the peace. (31-8-1934)

SADHAKA: Specially after seeing the Mother there is a deeper and greater voidness. Do you think that what is felt as a void is not true? Since about a week whatever is experienced is this emptiness and nothing else.

SRI AUROBINDO: Why not true? The void is the condition of the Self—free, wide and silent. It seems void to the mind but in reality it is simply a state of pure existence and consciousness, Sat and Chit with Shanti. (3-9-1934)

SADHAKA: Yesterday you wrote, "Sat and Chit with Shanti". Why "with Shanti"—that is to say, "with peace?"

SADHANA WITH THE MOTHER

SRI AUROBINDO: The three things are Sat, Chit and Ananda—but at this stage there is more usually the Shanti than the Ananda. (4-9-1934)

SADHAKA: The voidness in the vital is becoming profound and vast. I don't understand this voidness in the vital.

SRI AUROBINDO: It is an influence from the wider Self above occupying the vital. (4-9-1934)

SADHAKA: During a state of sheer blankness my consciousness feels no more the existence of mind, life and body.

SRI AUROBINDO: Yes, that is a usual experience when that state comes. (4-9-1934)

SADHAKA: My human consciousness feels too tired to sustain itself in a steady blankness.

SRI AUROBINDO: It must be the vital wanting to move about. (8-9-1934)

SADHAKA: Was it really the vital getting tired of the blankness? Or could it rather be the physical? As a result of the fatigue I was getting mechanical thoughts.

SRI AUROBINDO: The physical does not get tired of the blankness. It may feel tamasic because of its own tendency to inertia, but it does not usually object to voidness. Of course it may be the vital physical. You have only to reject it as a remnant of the old movements. (7-9-1934)

SADHAKA: Kindly see how far this description is correct: I rise higher in consciousness and feel as if I were seated on the head; no movement or thought exists in my inner or outer; I am dumb like dust.

SRI AUROBINDO: On the head means what—above it or just on the top outside? In any case it is an important movement in the direction of self-realisation. (7-9-1934)

SADHAKA: During the blank state my consciousness shifts its lodging from the inner mind centre to the head, e.g. around and above the head like a cap.

SRI AUROBINDO: That is a first entry into the higher consciousness. (12-9-1934)

SADHAKA: I see positively that very soon my consciousness will leave the body and station itself somewhere higher than the head.

SRI AUROBINDO: It is very good that the consciousness is realising this movement. (12-9-1934)

NAGIN DOSHI

# THE INTEGRAL YOGA OF SRI AUROBINDO

## CHAPTER XVIII

### THE INTEGRAL TRANSFORMATION

#### PART III

##### THE THREE STEPS OF TRANSFORMATION

THE essential function of the soul is to offer all things to the Divine for transformation, for it has come down into mortal birth for the only purpose of accomplishing a perfect manifestation of the Divine in its phenomenal becoming. But for the soul or the psychic, our mind, life and body would have always remained in an unrelieved darkness and gone on chasing after the fleeting objects of the world and involving themselves more and more in futile struggles and endless suffering.

The psychic awakes as it evolves in Nature and tries to influence its instrumental being at first from behind the veil and afterwards more and more overtly. Itself all love and devotion for the Divine, it infects the mind, life and body with its own passion and purity and seeks to turn them Godwards and towards the fulfilment of the very reason of their existence. The potential lord and master of its nature, it emerges from its secret crypt and, little by little, begins to influence, purify, control and convert mind, life and body till, psychically transformed, they become fit instruments of its self-expression in the world.

The psychic transformation is, therefore, the first step in the long and uphill labour of transformation undertaken by the followers of the Integral Yoga. The whole nature has first to be psychicised, that is to say, tuned to the psychic key, suffused with the psychic love and devotion for the Divine and lit up with the psychic purity. Surrender and self-consecration in work, surrender and a passionate self-giving in feelings and emotions, surrender and a loving concentration in thought and reflection, and an intense and constant aspiration for an integral and dynamic union with the Divine in all the members of the being—this is the first sure indication of a full and direct psychic action on the nature. The native impulse in the psychic is to give all it possesses to the Divine. As it emerges from its occult depths, it spreads its influence upon the

members of its phenomenal nature and tries to turn them towards the Divine. It may try at first to convert the intellect and the "larger mind of insight and intuitional intelligence", but the thinking mind, as soon as it undergoes a spiritual influence, seems almost always to betray a tendency to drift towards the abstract, the Impersonal, the Immutable. A better and more dynamically effective approach is through the heart. The feelings and emotions of the heart are nearer to the seat of the psychic, and it can seize on them with a greater ease and make them flow towards its eternal Lover and Master. Love and adoration of the Supreme, the All-Beautiful and All-Blissful, becomes under the direct influence of the psychic a flaming, absorbing passion, a passion like that of a Chaitanya or a Mirabai, which devours all egoistic ties and attachments. "This approach through adoration can get its full power and impetus only when the mind goes beyond impersonality to the awareness of a supreme Personal Being: then all becomes intense, vivid, concrete; the heart's emotion, feeling, spiritualised sense reach their absolute; an entire self-giving becomes possible, imperative."<sup>1</sup> The sadhaka comes more and more to be conscious of his soul and its will and seeks to follow it in his life. His emotional being develops into a lover of God and a lover of men and all creatures, and a spiritual peace and purity and bliss flood his whole nature. He becomes a bhakta, a saint.

But the mind and the heart are not the whole of man, there is his life with its desires and its will to possess and enjoy all that it finds attractive in the world. It has an infinite hunger raging interminably in its finite, limited form. When the vital will feels the pressure of the psychic upon it and undergoes its purifying influence, it turns to the Divine and learns to surrender to Him with an enthusiasm all its own, an enthusiasm and fervour which no other part of our being can show in an equal measure. The surrender of the personal will to the Truth-Will of the Divine eliminates the insistent self-assertion of the ego and considerably helps the widening of the consciousness.

"A combination of all these three approaches, the approach of the mind, the approach of the will, the approach of the heart, creates a spiritual or psychic condition of the surface being and nature in which there is a larger and more complex openness to the psychic light within us and to the spiritual Self or the Ishwara, to the Reality now felt above and enveloping and penetrating us. In the nature there is a more powerful and many-sided change, a spiritual building and self-creation, the appearance of a composite perfection of the saint, the selfless worker and the man of spiritual knowledge."<sup>2</sup>

In proportion as the sadhaka learns to live in his depths and offer all his

<sup>1</sup> *The Life Divine* by Sri Aurobindo

<sup>2</sup> *ibid.*

nature to the direct influence of his emergent soul, there begins a series of transmuting experiences in him. The psychic being comes forward as the unveiled guide and ruler of the nature. "A guidance, a governance begins from within which exposes every movement to the light of Truth, repels what is false, obscure, opposed to the divine realisation: every region of the being, every nook and corner of it, every movement, formation, direction, inclination of thought, will, emotion, sensation, action, reaction, motive, disposition, propensity, desire, habit of the conscious or subconscious physical, even the most concealed, camouflaged, mute, recondite, is lighted up with the unerring psychic light".<sup>1</sup>...And there begins also "a free inflow of all kinds of spiritual experience, experience of the Self, experience of the Ishwara and the Divine Shakti, experience of cosmic consciousness, a direct touch with cosmic forces and with the occult movements of universal Nature, a psychic sympathy and unity and inner communication and interchanges of all kinds with other beings and with Nature, illuminations of the mind by knowledge, illuminations of the heart by love and devotion and spiritual joy and ecstasy, illumination of the sense and the body by higher experience, illumination of dynamic action in the truth and largeness of a purified mind and heart and soul, the certitudes of the divine light and guidance, the joy and power of the divine force working in the will and the conduct."<sup>2</sup> All parts of the nature are lit up and quickened and transfigured by the presence and influence of the psychic. The mind develops an immediate vision and sense of the Truth, the heart the spiritual fire and rhythm in its feelings and emotions and a widening embrace of the world, and the will a one-pointed concentration in its aspiration to surrender and serve. The whole being tends to become a living altar of the Divine.

But though all this change and transformation may appear to most sadhakas of the traditional yogas as superlative and definitive,—indeed, few of them can conceive of a higher state—they are only the first decisive step in the Integral Yoga. The psychic transformation, even at its highest, is only a psychicismation of the inferior instrumentation of the nature; it is not a radical transformation of its basic elements, nor a victorious transcendence of its inherent limitations. It is a "reflected and modified manifestation of things whose full reality, intensity, largeness, oneness and diversity of truth and power and delight are above us, above mind and therefore above any perfection, within mind's own formula, of the foundations or superstructure of our present nature."<sup>3</sup>

The second step has, therefore, to be taken in the direction of the higher spiritual ranges of the mind and beyond. "A higher spiritual transformation

<sup>1</sup> *The Life Divine* by Sri Aurobindo

<sup>2</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> *ibid.*

must intervene on the psychic or psycho-spiritual change; the psychic movement inward to the inner being, the Self or Divinity within us, must be completed by an opening upward to a supreme spiritual status or a higher existence."<sup>1</sup> The opening within has to be supplemented by an opening above. The consciousness of the sadhaka has to ascend above the human mind into the Higher mind, the Illumined mind, the plane of Intuition and the Overmind, and receive from them the transmuting light and force peculiar to them. This ascent may not take place if he remains satisfied with the experiences of the Spirit in the terms of his human mind; it is only if the psychic being in him is fully awakened and aspires for the realisation of the supramental existence, the divine Reality above the ranges of the mind, that the lid of the mind is broken and his consciousness wings up into the thrilled infinitudes of the Spirit or commands a vision of the infinity above him—"an eternal Presence or an infinite Existence, an infinity of consciousness, an infinity of bliss,—a boundless Self, a boundless Light, a boundless Power, a boundless Ecstasy."<sup>2</sup> "The experience is in accord with that which is brought to us by the first opening of vision: the mind rises into the higher plane of pure self, silent, tranquil, illimitable; or it rises into regions of light or of felicity, or into planes where it feels an infinite Power or a divine Presence or experiences the contact of a divine Love or Beauty or the atmosphere of a wider and greater and luminous Knowledge."<sup>3</sup> In the beginning, when the mind comes down from these shining altitudes of experience, it finds that it has brought back with it nothing better than a blurred impression or that it has lost much of what it saw or felt above. But gradually it learns to retain much of its higher realisations and make the whole nature profit by them. These ascents of the consciousness take place usually in trance, but are "perfectly possible in a concentration of the waking consciousness or, where that consciousness has become sufficiently psychic, at any unconcentrated moment by an upward attraction or affinity."<sup>4</sup> Consequent upon the ascents, the descents of light and power and peace become more frequent and expansively effective, and they change and illumine the very texture of the human consciousness and knowledge. "A light and power, a knowledge and force are felt which first take possession of the mind and remould it, afterwards of the life part and remould that, finally of the little physical consciousness and leave it no longer little but wide and plastic and even infinite. For this new consciousness has itself the nature of infinity: it brings to us the abiding spiritual sense and awareness of the infinite

<sup>1</sup> *The Life Divine* by Sri Aurobindo

<sup>2</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>4</sup> *ibid.*



and eternal with a great largeness of the nature and a breaking down of its limitations; immortality becomes no longer a belief or an experience but a normal self-awareness; the close presence of the Divine Being, his rule of the world and our self and natural members, his force working in us and everywhere, the peace of the infinite, the joy of the infinite are now concrete and constant in the being; in all sights and forms one sees the Eternal, the Reality, in all sounds one hears it, in all touches feels it; there is nothing else but its forms and personalities and manifestations; the joy or adoration of the heart, the embrace of all existence, the unity of the Spirit are abiding realities. The consciousness of the mental creature is turning or has been already turned wholly into the consciousness of the spiritual being. This is the second of the three transformations; uniting the manifested existence with what is above it, it is the middle step of the three, the decisive transition of the spiritually evolving nature."<sup>1</sup>

But even the spiritual transformation with its immense achievements—the universalisation of the human consciousness, the widening and illumination of human nature, the bridging up of the chasm between the human mind and the higher realms of the Spirit, the direct and dynamic contact with the cosmic forces, the union and communion with the cosmic Divine—cannot transform the whole human nature into the Supernature. To the mind that considers spiritual values and realisations in the gross and possesses no insight into their depths and degrees, the achievements of the spiritual transformation may appear as exceptionally high and rare. But they are inadequate to the fulfilment of the ideal Sri Aurobindo has placed before us. Human nature is a complex manifold shot through with the threads of the ego, and the light and power of the higher planes that come down to illumine and transform it cannot completely prevail against its tangled impurities. The first and most important reason of it is that the light and power that descend cannot act in their native purity and force—their action is interfered with, obscured, diminished and diluted by the lower energies of human nature. The second reason is that the powers of the higher ranges of the spiritual mind, even were it possible for them to work here in their own purity and force, could not achieve a radical conversion of human nature, for, they are not the supreme creative powers of the Spirit. It is only the supreme creative Light-Force, the Chit-Tapas of the Supermind or Vijnana, that can act here in its full power, without suffering any diminution or dilution, and effect a radical and integral conversion and transformation. The Creator alone can refashion, remould and transmute into its own substance and force what it has created. The descent of the Supramental Truth-Force

<sup>1</sup> *The Life Divine* by Sri Aurobindo

is, therefore, indispensable for the supramental transformation. But the Supermind is not only above, exerting from there its transforming pressure upon the evolving earth-nature, or descending into it to accelerate and accomplish the work; it is, like all other cardinal principles of existence, also involved here below and pressing upwards from its unlit depths for evolution, for a complete and controlling emergence. The meeting of the two is the decisive point of the supreme fruition. The supramental Light-Force can alone handle each element of human nature with a masterful finality. The utmost that the spiritual transformation can do is the universalisation of the conscious being of man, but it cannot transform the Inconscience, which still remains as the base of his existence. It can vouchsafe frequent glimpses of the Transcendent or even contact and communion with It, but it cannot “dynamise the Transcendence” in this world, that is to say, it cannot bring down the omnipotent Consciousness-Force of the Transcendent and make it directly operative in this field of ignorance and inconscience.<sup>1</sup> But the supramental Will is the authentic will of the Supreme, and its Force carries in it the fiat and fire of the Absolute. It commands an infinite power of free self-determination. It knows the precise hour, the precise way, of dealing with each element of our nature; and its touch is infallibly transforming. It descends into the human mind and widens it into infinity, filling it with its own all-revealing illumination; it descends into the heart and floods it with its own termless bliss and love and sweetness; it descends into life and its energies and informs them with its own all-achieving force. Its powers, unlike those of the spiritual mind-ranges, suffer no clouding or dilution by their contact with the elements of the earthly nature—they work in their own right and in the divine fullness of their potencies. One comes to perceive, as one advances in the Yoga of the supramental transformation, that the members of one’s being, now that they are already purified and illumined, respond with a joyous spontaneity to the action of the Supermind upon them. They seem, as it were, to recognise their Creator and readily submit to its benignly transforming force. The supramental Light-Force descends into the subconscious and inconscient ranges of our being and fills them with its electric energies and irradiates their immemorial gloom.

The transforming action of the Supermind is characterised by a certain sovereign effectivity and a natural radicality impossible to any other spiritual power. If it sometimes halts in its working or retraces its steps, it is because it has chosen to allow the parts of human nature time and some amount of latitude to adjust themselves to the high-pitched demands of the transforma-

<sup>1</sup> “So long as there is not the supramental change down to the subconscious, complete and full, the lower nature has always a hold on some part of the being”. The life Divine.

tion. It does often force the pace and quicken the momentum of the change, but never at the cost of repression or mutilation of any part—it knows the magic of conversion and transmutation without compulsion. If its action seems to be at times exacting or compelling, it is because it proceeds in the light of a knowledge which knows exactly when a part is ripe for transformation, and acts with the consent of the Purusha dwelling in that part. Its power and its unfailing effectivity derives from the fact of its dynamic unity and identity with our whole being, and even when it deals with details and infinitesimal parts, it never loses itself in them, but acts from a perfect knowledge of the organic unity of all being and its inner harmony with all universal existence.

The most outstanding feature of the action of the Supermind is its masterfully radical dealing with our physical nature. It will annul the sway of the Inconscience and the Ignorance under which our physical being labours at present, saturate the nerves, tissues and cells of our body with its own light and quicken it with its own force. Our body will cease to be the gross, inert, impeding clod that it now is, and become, instead, a vibrant dynamo of luminous energies, conscious of its oneness with universal Matter. Sri Aurobindo describes his own experience of transformation in the following poem:

### TRANSFORMATION

My breath runs in a subtle rhythmic stream;  
 It fills my members with a might divine:  
 I have drunk the Infinite like a giant's wine.  
 Time is my drama or my pageant dream.  
 Now are my illumined cells joy's flaming scheme  
 And changed my thrilled and branching nerves to fine  
 Channels of rapture opal and hyaline  
 For the influx of the Unknown and the Supreme.

I am no more a vassal of the flesh,  
 A slave to Nature and her leaden rule;  
 I am caught no more in the senses' narrow mesh.  
 My soul unhorizoned widens to measureless sight,  
 My body is God's happy living tool,  
 My spirit a vast sun of deathless light.<sup>1</sup>

The Supermind will consummate the work of the integration and harmonisation of our being begun by the psychic and developed by the spiritual

<sup>1</sup> *The Collected Poems and Plays of Sri Aurobindo.*— Vol. II

transformation. The integration of the human personality seems to be one of the insistent aspirations of the progressive mind of the modern humanity. What is usually meant by it is a sort of welding and harmonisation of the parts of being of which one is conscious. But such an integration, even if it succeeds, will be a very imperfect one, inasmuch as it will leave out the far-flung obscure bases and the shining summits of our being, which are not normally accessible to human consciousness. We know only the active superficial parts of our being which are but an outer fringe of our boundless existence. The ideal of integration, which is claiming our attention more and more, carries in it the promise of an unprecedented fulfilment; but the present attempts that are being made to realise it are nothing better than a clumsy groping or an awkward assortment by the rational mind which has neither any means of exploring the subconscious and the inconscient layers of our being, except by a haphazard analysis of the superficial traits and habits of the nature, nor of scaling the limitless ranges of the Superconscient. There are two essential prerequisites of the integration of the human personality: one, the discovery and realisation of the soul or the living centre of the human being, and, second, an exploration and conquest of the totality of the being including the superconscient and the inconscient. Our finite being is centred in the Infinite and our mortality is a passing wave of the Eternal. It is, therefore, idle to talk of the integration of its members without linking them up with the Infinite and Eternal. The Integral Yoga seeks to effect a perfect dynamic integration of our personality by restoring to us the whole of our lost opulent empire, rajyam samriddham.

The supramental transformation will knit in a stable and dynamic harmony the individual, the universal and the transcendent. The individual will find his completeness and harmonious fulfilment in his active unity with the universal and the transcendent. And this completeness will not be a completeness only in the consciousness of the individual, but it will also be a creative completeness in the will and force of his being; for, they too will be united with the Will and Force of the Supreme, which expresses itself in cosmic terms even while it transcends them.... "The complete individual is the cosmic individual, since only when we have taken the universe into ourselves—and transcended it—can our individuality be complete."<sup>2</sup>

The supramental transformation will admit us into a participation in the working of the Supernature or Para Prakriti. The more we advance from the spiritual to the supramental transformation, the more shall we cease to be mere instruments of the divine Will and Force, and enter into a "growing conscious participation of the higher and more intimate kind" with it. This experience

<sup>2</sup> *The Life Divine* by Sri Aurobindo

## MOTHER INDIA

of conscious participation and collaboration will be an unfailing accompaniment of the later phases of the supramental transformation.

The three steps of the transformation as described above should not be considered as strictly successive; the spiritual transformation may begin before the psychic transformation has reached its culmination, or the supramental transformation may intervene in the midst of the spiritual transformation in order to accelerate its pace and shorten the long way. Human nature is bafflingly complex, and the Divine's dealing with it, as soon as it is surrendered to Him, is incalculable and unpredictable. Particularly, the supramental transformation, which is an exclusive operation of the Divine Mahashakti, may often appear to our human consciousness as a whirlwind process sweeping through the heights and bases, the deeps and shallows of our being, bursting open the sealed centres, releasing the hidden waters, illumining the recondite corners, and uniting and integrating all strands and elements and forces in a sovereign, dynamic harmony. The integral transformation is the indispensable foundation of the Life Divine and the *sine qua non* of the manifestation of the Divine in the earth-consciousness.

*(To be continued)*

RISHABHCHAND

# MATTER AND LIFE

## A SCRUTINY OF SCIENTIFIC OPINIONS

*(Continued from the previous issue)*

### III

IN biology mechanistic or mechanical materialism is, strictly speaking, the view that the organism is a sum of the processes of the units composing it and that this sum is just an ordered aggregate such as a machine illustrates, but without any mechanic creating the order. Sherrington passes beyond so crude a view by saying that the organism is "additive by integrative co-organization" and, despite the machine-features in it, is more than a sum of unit processes in action and reaction: its wholeness exceeds such a sum. However, he finds this wholeness merely a highly complex version of what science by its growth in subtlety has come to recognise more and more in inorganic nature: namely, balanced systems. It is therefore simply a phenomenon, not yet fully analysed, belonging to the domain of physics and chemistry of the type already known to us in our laboratories. And, if one sees life thus, one's biological theory is still a mechanical materialism, though more refined than the old variety.

We have shown Sherrington's materialism to be untenable because of its being based on a misunderstanding of the true nature of the central characteristic mentioned by himself of life—organic unity, the individual whole that an organism constitutes by integrative co-organization. A similar misunderstanding—curious in one with a greater philosophical acumen—leads also the most prominent name in non-mechanistic biology, Ludwig von Bertalanffy, not only to criticise defects in prevalent vitalistic theories but to repudiate the very essence of vitalism which posits a purposive more-than-material life-force utilising physico-chemical processes within certain limits imposed by them: he adheres to another type of materialistic thought which has come to be known as "organicism". We must now examine his thesis as propounded in his recent book, *Problems of Life*.

At about the same time as J. H. Woodger in England (1926), von Bertalanffy brought to light a theoretical position purporting to avoid both mechanism and vitalism. The "organismic conception", as he called it, agreed with Driesch that the results of his experiments could never be accounted for by crudely

considering the organism as the sum of its parts in action and reaction. It went further and found even refined mechanism wanting. And yet vitalism was given no quarter. In consequence, biology was seen as irreducible to the current type of physics and chemistry, yet not as exceeding all chemistry and physics. A physics and chemistry specific to biology was sought for. The theme was: what new physics and chemistry would explain organic unity, the distinct biological whole?

The difference between this theme and that which Sherrington appears to pursue can be shown by indicating how each proposes to join the physico-chemical with the biological. As already hinted, minds like Sherrington are disposed to incorporate biology into physics and chemistry by a mere extrapolation of the laws of the latter: the same laws are supposed to operate in a more complicated medium in biology, and biological laws are taken to be nothing except special extensions of them. Minds like von Bertalanffy believe that biology must have an autonomous development which, while not entirely refusing extrapolation from physics and chemistry, has its own postulates, its own set of laws and when the synthesis with physics and chemistry finally takes place an enlargement of the conceptual scheme of these two sciences will be necessary on account of biological study, without, however, the introduction of any factor which is not physico-chemical.

Surely the organismic attitude is more sane than the mechanistic. It is also more in tune with the actual procedure within physics and chemistry themselves. Von Bertalanffy gives a few examples, of which we may cite one. "Classical chemistry attributed to every atom a definite number of valencies, saturated when the atom enters into chemical combination with another. These valencies are sufficient so far as chemical compounds in the classical sense are concerned. They are not sufficient, however, to explain, for example, crystallization, macromolecular compounds, cohesion and so on; rather does the atom display further forces termed secondary valencies, lattice or van der Waals forces. In turn, they are explained by modern electron and quantum theory. In all such cases the inclusion of new phenomena into physical theory necessitates a modification and refinement of the original picture."

This is sound observation. But the bed of Procrustes is suggested if one assumes that biology must be incorporated into the physico-chemical at all costs. The chopper is evidently in the hands of the fear lest the admission of a supra-material agent should end the attempt at objective description, precise calculation and unequivocal correlation. This fear is to a considerable degree a mistake. If there is a life-force, it does not act without physico-chemical modes nor is its action unrestricted: an intricate web of process within process would be present in the organism in connection with the acts of such an agent.

It can be investigated and a host of specific laws formulated without necessarily involving the denial of a supra-material entity as the ultimate source and presiding genius of the organism's "wholeness" and of organic control and regulation. The physico-chemical ceases only to be the final ground and determinant. And for a scientist to neglect physico-chemical investigation in the name of the supra-material would be an obscurantist vitalism. But likewise would it be for a scientist an obscurantist materialism to go about with the preconception that nothing should be admitted except matter. A balance between the material and the supra-material should be possible in science—provided one condition is satisfied in the very last and culminating statement, a condition which vitalistic theories mostly ignore. Although a present difficulty in satisfying it should not restrain one from vitalism if the evidence is strong against the materialistic theory, no vitalism can be finally adequate unless matter and life are proved to be not essentially dissimilar. Essential dissimilarity would preclude interaction and make any balance between the two unintelligible. However, there can be a lower synthesis and a higher synthesis. In the one, life is reduced to matter, whether matter be conceived according to current physics and chemistry or according to an expanded version suggested by biological processes. In the other, matter is reduced to life and taken as a special limited case of vitality which is thus seen as fundamental.<sup>1</sup> So long as an ultimate reduction in some form is the goal, there should be scientifically no less than philosophically as little *a priori* objection to vitalism as to materialism. To insist either that the reduction should be only in one direction, the materialistic, or that if there is to be a reduction in the opposite direction it should be immediate is to harbour prejudice and to lack in proper humility before Truth.

Von Bertalanffy professes to keep an open mind as to the metaphysical truth or illusiveness of vitalism but says that in science vitalism is illegitimate. Hence organic unity is bound to be chopped up by him to be something never *sui generis*: biological wholeness can never escape being so defined as to drop out all significant uniqueness. How completely this uniqueness is dropped out is clear when he tells us the rule that "holds for every 'whole' ". He writes: "The question arises as to what the supposed 'non-summativity' of higher levels with respect to the lower ones really means, and in how far the former are explicable in terms of the latter. The answer is simple. The properties and modes of higher levels are not explicable by the summation of the properties and modes of action of their components *taken in isolation*. If, however, we know the *ensemble* of the components and the *relations existing between them*,

<sup>1</sup> Of course the term "fundamental" is relative. We are using it only as between two categories, matter and life. More fundamental than life would be mind and even beyond mind there could be spirit. But these are not our concern here.



then the higher levels are derivable from the components." This kind of whole is certainly not the organic unity we have spoken of and distinguished from a system of interrelated parts, whether the system be a molecule or a man-made machine. Von Bertalanffy, although he is not crude enough to deny all distinction, sees no such difference. And immediately after the above passage he exemplifies his definition. "Naturally, a mere summation of, say, a number of C, H, O, and N atoms gives no adequate knowledge of the compound molecule. This is readily seen, for example, in isomerism, when compounds consisting of the same atoms, but in different arrangement, have different properties. If, on the contrary, the structural formula is known, then the properties of the molecule are intelligible in terms of its parts, the component atoms.... Adding up the charges in the parts of an electrical conductor, we cannot find the distribution of charge in the conductor as a whole, because it depends on the configuration of the whole system. If the parameters of the parts and the boundary conditions of the whole system are known, the distribution of charge in the latter can be derived 'from the parts'."

We have thus a complete dilution of the concept of the whole. And, for von Bertalanffy, the peculiarity of the organic whole lies not in its incomparable uniqueness but in whatever relations of a biological as distinct from a non-biological kind exist between the parts—relations which, despite this distinction, are still akin in essence to those obtaining in inorganic wholes. Exactly as it might be in physics and chemistry, says von Bertalanffy, "the lack of a rigid theory in fields like developmental physiology is connected with the fact that they have not yet found the necessary abstractions and symbolisms." The absence of a special "biological mathematics", so to speak, concerned not so much with the notion of quantity as with those of "pattern", "position" and "shape", is all the gap in these fields: organic unity, though restricted in its particulars to the biological level and to that extent unique, is in its generalities just another form of inorganic unity.

Apart from the prejudice that vitalism is illegitimate in science, von Bertalanffy is influenced by a defect in the vitalist Driesch's conception of the structure of an organism. Driesch conceives the wholeness of an organism as due to a factor different from and added to the material system rather than immanent in that system's constellation. If it is different from and added to the material system, von Bertalanffy argues, the system is looked upon as just a sum of its parts modified towards non-summativity by a life-force which stands apart from it. Driesch's vitalism, therefore, takes a "mechanical" view of the organism. Surely, in this respect von Bertalanffy is right as against Driesch. The entirely mechanical view of the body is mistaken, whether taken by a mechanist or a vitalist; but does that alter the character of organic unity? We may look upon

a material system as not a sum of its parts but a unity, and yet stick to vitalism if organic unity exceeds the type which von Bertalanffy has in mind and which, despite specificities as between level and level, takes in both the atom and the cell by its too broad definition. His criticism of the vitalistic theory may very well be criticised as applying to a non-essential of this theory. Vitalism would not be rendered superfluous by our being told that before positing a life-force we have to deal not with a mechanical organism but with an organism which acts as a whole. All depends on what sort of a whole a non-vitalistic idea of the organism would provide.

Let us recall the general fundamental features underlined by us of organic unity when we were dealing with Sherrington's confusion. "First, each part of a growing organism carries in itself up to a certain early stage of the organism's development the presence or pattern of the whole, so that, if separated from the other parts with which it was co-operating through a particular function, it can produce a complete organism of the same type. Secondly, each part, up to a certain stage, can change its function if its place in the organism is changed and do what the new place which it occupies needs it to do, as if each part had the sense of each point of the pattern and as if the pattern were independent of the material from which it seems to be made and could use any material to serve the function assigned to each point. Thirdly, each part joins with the others to form a separate distinct single organism, an organic individual, in which there is to a considerable extent not only a functional dependence of the parts on the whole so that the parts, if isolated, would be disorganized but also an existential dependence such that the parts in isolation would cease even to be recognisable. Each of the three features and *a fortiori* their ensemble appears to prove that the whole has a primacy and that the parts are brought together essentially for its sake, for the purpose of expressing it."

The immanent whole as postulated by von Bertalanffy is inadequate to organic unity as we find it—basically as inadequate as the mechanical structure postulated by the summationists, to which Driesch felt obliged to add a transcendent factor. The call for vitalism remains even after we discard the old mechanical theory of the organism. The whole as a factor genuinely transcendent in some manner can alone give us organic unity.

Another argument of von Bertalanffy's against a transcendent factor rests on certain experimental observations. Among the several signs of such a factor in embryonic processes Driesch had mentioned "equifinality"—the reaching of the same end-results from different initial conditions—and the movement towards the most nearly typical result in the future despite interference, provided sufficient material is available during the process. Casting doubt on Driesch's notion of "entelechy", of a director of embryonic events in anticipation of the

goal, von Bertalanffy writes: "Experience shows that the 'whole' on which determination depends is not the typical result to be reached in the future, but the actual state of the developing system at a given time which can be indicated in any particular case. To be sure, inasmuch as determination has not yet taken place, there is equifinality. However, development does not proceed 'purposely' in the sense that the best and most typical result possible is achieved, as should be the case with an entelechy directing events in foresight of the goal. What really happens, whether, when, and how regulation occurs, is unequivocally determined by the conditions present. For example,  $\frac{1}{2}$ -blastomeres of the sea-urchin yield complete larvae, and so do  $\frac{1}{4}$ -blastomeres; from parts of the eight-celled and later stages complete or defective formations develop, depending on the cell material present or experimentally combined, and it can be indicated in every case which result will be obtained in a given cell combination. It has been said that the course of development proceeds with 'the senseless industry of necessity' irrespective of whether the result is good or bad, teleological, dysteleological, or ateleological. Also, it cannot be maintained that entelechy would try to achieve the most typical result possible, and is prevented from attaining this goal by the inadequacy of the material available. For example, in super-regeneration up to six hind legs can be developed in toads if suitable incisions are made. Obviously the work of entelechy is not limited here by the lack of material at its disposal; rather the process is necessarily determined by the material conditions present. The force of this argument is enhanced by remembering that, according to Driesch, one of the fundamental actions of entelechy is 'suspension' of potential processes, meaning that it stops certain processes in normal as well as regulative development, in such a way that the most nearly typical whole is formed. Super-regenerates and other monsters clearly demonstrate the impotence of entelechy.... Therefore, we can exclude the assumption of a principle which joins the material system of the embryo and governs its action in dependence on the typical result to be reached in the future. The 'wholeness' manifest in the processes of development is immanent in, not transcendent to, the embryo."

The precise bearing of this argument on our thesis can be measured if we hark back to our qualification of organic unity when we spoke of mechanistic elements present in the living creature. We said that such elements are bound to be there and can at times work so as to go against organic unity. In von Bertalanffy's passage we see another example of mechanistic action—or, rather, since he repudiates mechanism in the ordinary sense, non-vitalistic action—yet it is as little subversive as the rest are of the fact that organic unity does exist. If a heart taken out of a frog and kept beating, if the growth of epithelial cells in a chaotic way to destroy the organism cannot cover up the fact of organic unity,

neither can "super-regenerates and other monsters". The issue is really not whether Driesch's conception of vitalism is correct in all details, or whether the future rather than the actual state of the developing system at a given time is the determinant, or whether there are conditions under which even with ample material the most nearly typical whole is not formed. The issue is whether, no matter what happens, there is or there is not in a radical sense "a whole presupposed by the parts".

At every moment the embryo is, in Sherrington's phrase, "never any less than a self-centred individual...a self-centred co-operative society which is familial and a unity—an organization of family cells, with corporate individuality." This individuality may find itself limited by external circumstances, it may go in several respects wrong with regard to the form expected; but under all conditions it still remains evident. It acts as a "co-organization of an integrative kind" which means that the organism behaves in general as if every component were itself the whole in a particular aspect—that the components do not merely get organized to act in a system of interrelations while themselves remaining foreign to the idea of the system, but are imbued with the idea, as it were, and spontaneously co-operate from within themselves and serve the whole as if that whole were their own being, on a larger more fully manifested scale. It is because the components act, to a greater or less degree, like self-differentiations of a unity that the biological whole varies from a whole purely physico-chemical. A power seems there, pre-existent to the components and securing their organization. The term "entelechy" does not describe all the phenomena of this power: it stresses the goal more than the whole: this power's main characteristic is perhaps hit off by saying that an integratively co-organized whole of some kind or other is the principal goal. As long as some such whole is achieved by it, be it the most nearly typical or no, a unity which differs radically from any physico-chemical one possible is in action. Super-regenerates and similar monsters make no odds to the essence of vitalism, for they are still wholes physico-chemically impossible.

In face of this impossibility we cannot stop at the immanent "wholeness" insisted on by von Bertalanffy. But, inasmuch as the organism is proved to be not a mechanical structure and inasmuch as the transcendent factor works under limitations imposed by the material system, we must grant that side by side with the transcendent factor and to a degree subduing it is an immanent whole which is just a sum of the relations among the parts at each moment, the parts themselves by entering into relation with one another undergoing in their processes a change from what they do in isolation yet never behaving as though each were in a less or more measure the very whole in a particular aspect. It was this immanent whole that was forgotten by Driesch who took the organism *per se*

to be mechanistic. But just as he was mechanistic in regard to the parts, von Bertalanffy is mechanistic in regard to their relations: both are in their different ways additive and summative and the mistake of the one leads him to a transcendent factor while ignoring the immanent "wholeness" and the mistake of the other leads him to an immanent "wholeness" to the exclusion of the transcendent factor.

The strongest argument of all that von Bertalanffy musters, against mechanism on one side and vitalism on the other, and in support of his affirmation at the same time that biological relations are distinct from non-biological and that both the types are finally one—his strongest argument comes from his brilliant formulation of a physics and chemistry peculiar to the biological whole. The formulation is designated by him as "an open system in a steady state" and he has constructed a theoretical model—that is, a mathematical model on paper and not in the laboratory—of a material system of this kind, which is proved by him and other organicists to be suggesting the causes of certain special biological features apparently without needing a factor apart from the system. An example of such features is the dynamic equilibrium of an organism undergoing metabolic processes. Another is the constancy of the entropy content: Prigogine has calculated that in an open system, in contrast to a closed system such as we find in inanimate nature, the entropy content is constant but not maximal as in the equilibrium of a closed system. Under certain conditions it can even decrease, proving very pointedly the limitations of the second law of thermodynamics, and conduce to an increase in complexity and order. Again, the open system can achieve the same steady state whatever the starting conditions and return to a steady state after deviation: here we have an "equifinality" giving the appearance of purposefulness as if the system were directed towards the attainment of a given state in the future—quite the opposite of what happens in a closed inanimate system where the state at any moment depends on the state in the past. An extremely interesting account of the open system and its various physico-chemical capacities is provided in von Bertalanffy's *Problems of Life* and a fine summary of the mathematical findings of von Bertalanffy as well as others in the same field may be perused in *New Biology 16* in the article *The Organism as a Physico-chemical Machine*. No doubt, it is a system with many serious gaps, as von Bertalanffy himself admits in the words which, in the second instalment of our series, we have quoted in connection with the present posture of affairs in embryology. But it is developed enough to mark a momentous step in the physics and chemistry of the organism. It fully justifies von Bertalanffy in saying that biological relations are distinct from non-biological. On the strength of it he can substantiate his statement that not even in principle can organic unity be reduced to the laws of physical *gestalten*—that is,

of physical systems that attain a state of equilibrium and represent wholes. He declares with perfect right that here are "problems that are beyond a mere application of *gestalt* principles known in inanimate nature. Rather a specific *gestalt* principle immanent in the organism is to be supposed."

But is he justified in repudiating vitalism? His new physics and chemistry is surely an eye-opener for the vitalist when the latter tends to regard vitalism as immediately resulting on the rejection of mechanistic materialism in biology. All the same, do they support von Bertalanffy's claim that they lead to a non-vitalistic theory of life? The answer is: No. His work demonstrates in some detail how the specific biological *gestalt* functions. But organic unity, as already pointed out, exceeds a whole such as understood by the *gestalttheorie* which gives us merely the physico-chemical configuration, whether the configuration be in the domain of the physico-chemical of the current type or in that of the Bertalanffian type. The biological *gestalt* remains a configuration whole, whatever its specificity. By the vitalistic features it exhibits it does not bring life under the rubric of the physico-chemical. When, for instance, we are told that the same end-results can be reached by it from different initial conditions, we have only to ask: Are the end-results organic unity? If not, the equifinality exhibited falls short of life's manifestation. What the biological *gestalt* constitutes is nothing more than the right physico-chemical basis for the unity that is organic.

But, of course, if it is nothing more, it is also nothing less. For, without it life cannot build itself in matter and the theory of vitalism will be somewhat freakish. So, while we must refrain from believing with von Bertalanffy that an expansion of the accepted physico-chemical scheme by the concept of the open system in a steady state is sufficient for the arrival of life and that the functioning of inorganic components in an unknown physico-chemical manner can give us the full biological phenomenon, we cannot deny the necessity of such expansion and such functioning. How else is the biological *gestalt* to take shape and serve as life's indispensable medium of manifestation? Even if we posit a life-force we can but regard it as using matter not only according to its own vital character but also according to what matter itself is capable of. Unless matter is found to have properties unknown to us today, we cannot conceive of the emergence of the biological *gestalt* under even the stress of a life-force. For, the life-force would be dealing with matter and if matter did not prove capable of a new physics and chemistry it could not be vitalised. But the question is whether in accounting for the new physics and chemistry of the biological whole we would not need to go ultimately beyond all physics and chemistry.

There is no doubt that we would. Still, two alternatives face us. Is life



something utterly different from matter or is the inorganic merely a condition of involved vitality—matter being then nothing save vitality in a particular state of self-concealment which at a certain point of physico-chemical change releases the concealed nature? The release would mean the formation of the new *gestalt* by that nature as the basis of the latter's manifestation. On principles of science as well as of philosophy we must look on matter as involved vitality if we cannot be satisfied with looking on life as merely evolved materiality.

Such a view, fully worked out, would imply the existence of a life-force in itself, unconcealed and uninvolved, on a "plane" of its own and the concealment and involution as a partial phase of its being, an adventure of losing itself and finding itself under circumstances that start with seemingly its very opposite. In that case, the release or evolution of vitality from the apparently inorganic would be due at the same time to an urge from within the concealed and involved condition and to a pressure upon that condition by the life-force from its status as a free and undiminished agent. Then we should expect in the phenomenon of life four things together—an amount of the physico-chemical directly extrapolated from the inorganic: an amount of the physico-chemical specifically biological, irreducible to the former, joining it only in an expanded scheme of physics and chemistry: tentative touches of something that transcends all physico-chemical formula: direct activity of the transcendent factor at crucial decisive points. We suggest that an unbiased gaze on the organic phenomenon reveals just these four things simultaneously, and the transcendent touches of both kinds come in not as purely inexplicable intrusions but as creators of unsuspected and unique physico-chemical processes, perhaps some functioning of matter even beyond the open system in a steady state, and the main wonder of these touches lies precisely in their role as such creators. They can play that role because the life-force is not alien to matter: only, it is not matter that is the explanation of life but life that explains matter by being the original power whose involved condition in various degrees is the physico-chemical. The problem of interaction is thus solved and intelligibility given in principle to a balance between the material and the supra-material. Also, the sway of the physico-chemical over so much of the biological is rendered clear since the involution must make the former the widely determinant matrix of the latter. But the almost unlimited potentialities of development of the physico-chemical is no less given a rationale, for matter is no longer confined to a single cadre or a few sets of cadres and the life-force is no longer an agent acting quite *ab extra*: it acts as matter's inmost hidden nature and even the most transcendent touches have an underlying continuity with the immanent whole.

Everything considered, a position of this kind appears the most logical, if

not the solely logical. Von Bertalanffy's work does not at all justify any doubt about the essence of vitalism. And we may state some inferences from this conclusion as follows. To begin with, the expanded scheme of the physico-chemical which he hopes for will go a long way towards providing rationally for the possibility of a transition from the inorganic to the organic, but by itself it will not make the transition completely explicable. Apropos the problem which we mentioned in our opening article—that of synthetising life in the laboratory—and which we declared on the way to being solved, we may remark that indeed the solution will take place soon, but, when we succeed in synthetising a colloid of a certain complexity and structure, something will suddenly animate it and the logical connection will never be entirely struck upon in physico-chemical terms. Only by the operation of a life-force the inorganic interrelated closed system can become in full the biological interrelated open system in a steady state and supply the required physico-chemical basis for organic unity. Further, if in physico-chemical terms there is no totally intelligible transition between the inorganic and the organic, what brought about this crucial becoming must also sustain it, for otherwise the new condition will lapse into the old. Also, what effected the transition by acting from beyond the physico-chemical may be thought of as subtly influencing in various directions the physics and chemistry of the new condition throughout an individual organism's career as well as throughout the history of organic evolution.

The last inference is the most important, but we shall not undertake here to give it an elaborate illustrative content. A separate article would be needed for that. What we shall do, before closing, is to face in brief a certain philosophical question posed by the formula that has been used so much by us—organic unity. We have also employed the word "individuality" as a synonym for the formula. Well, if organic unity implies an effective whole prior in some sense to the parts as well as to the relations between them, if it is a unity from which interrelated multiplicity originally proceeds as though to serve an overall purpose, a unity not built out of multiplicity and then reacting as a system of relations upon the relata, does it imply a sort of individual "soul" for each organism? Our answer can only be: "From the philosophical standpoint, organic unity implies primarily that, under material conditions that tend to obstruct and obscure all surface manifestation, a supra-material power works out in each of its expressions an 'idea' in its secret being: this power carries on a purposive activity, much as a poet inspired by a situation may purpose to create a poem, each part of which would serve and express its general motive, and may move towards the creation of this form through conditions of varying difficulty. We should also say that behind each organism thus fashioned, there must be not only a general life-force but some individualising character in the force, as if there were 'souls' trying to effect



## MOTHER INDIA

forms for themselves and tending through the long history of evolution to emerge more and more from their subliminal stations, as it were, into the surface awareness—'souls' which we may regard ultimately as themselves numerically multiple expressions of an essentially single universal being that is the life of all lives."

These philosophical significances inevitably arise from the scientific fact ascertained by us that, if we approach from the side of the physico-chemical rather than from the side of a life-force whose partial phase is a concealing self-materialisation and an involution in physico-chemical process, we shall always strike against a difference of kind rather than of degree between matter and life—a difference which cuts the ground from under every species of biological materialism.

K. D. SETHNA

## NEW ROADS

(Continued)

### BOOK III

At times the sun shone through the clouds of night  
As if a mighty wind had swept the skies  
To fire the heart with blue eternal peace;  
These days were happy with remembered bliss.  
So too at times bright eyes of hope would shine  
Like friendly stars that know the journey's end.  
And moons of wonder would entrance the soul  
In far-off solitudes of ecstasy.  
Brief dawns of Silence would approach the mind,  
Like timid fauns from mythic worlds of Light  
That scent the air of yet unconquered grounds.  
Small moments, Big with all eternity,  
Would daze the heart to long forgotten hours—  
Left in the memory of another age.  
And consciousness would measure from its heights,  
See there the splendours of the Dawns of Truth.  
But mostly there were days when no sun shone,  
No star or moon would pierce the veil of night,  
And mind with grim imagination strove  
To capture dreams and images of light,  
And make of them a statue or a shrine  
At which to worship; for the mind must know  
The facts and figures of Divinity.  
So mind became a snare to lead astray  
Those who were dazzled with false ecstasy—  
Who found delight in intermediate worlds  
Attracted by the vital toys of sense  
On roads that led to masked ephemeral joys,  
While Fame and Fortune waited for their pay—  
The dire Emolument—The Reaper, Death.  
Long was the journeying through this valley of night

## MOTHER INDIA

Where ignorance embraced us like a mist  
And wrapped uncertainty around a mind  
That wished to reason with the state of things  
Surrounded with bright unassailable heights  
And bordered by depths of unimaginable doom,  
Bright visions of glories yet to be achieved  
Vied with possible stark calamities  
And played creation's game of pitch and toss.  
We pressed beyond the borders of the world  
Into the pathways of eternity;  
But body, like a child who lags behind,  
Could not keep pace along with parent mind  
Who stopped to wait—a slave to matter still  
And yet a stranger to the Higher Mind:  
Matter the heavy drag upon the hours,  
Matter the field of future dawns of Light.  
There were the heights, the rainbow-grandeur hues,  
There also were the nether depths unknown.  
Here too within the breast a growing Flame  
Leaped to the Promise and the Pulse of Time.  
There were deep inner states—and ancient roads  
Which had to be retraced to start again  
Along these New Roads to Divinity.  
There were wells of lonely seeking lost in gloom  
Left from an age-old habit of past lives  
When fear of God was felt to be sincere.  
Those only could maintain the quickening pace,  
The hero-warriors in the epic march  
Without a thought for self-agrandisement—  
They kept their vision fixed upon the goal;  
Their minds untroubled by the world's uproar,  
Their hearts unsullied by the petty fears  
They saw, as flickering shadows on a wall,  
The play and pageantry of human life—  
The mock charade of peopled purposes.  
They were not awed by the mighty task in hand  
Nor wearied by the oft-repeated days,  
The uneventful gazing through the hours—  
When hope seemed distant and the breath of life  
Was hardly worth the labour and the pain.

## NEW ROADS

Their courage was of God, their faith a flame  
That knew its contact with the listening soul  
And felt the Real beyond appearances.  
This was itself a high Event in Time  
Like the Aryan Trek in some pre-Vedic age,  
Or the Israelite's exodus from Egypt's yoke.  
Only this followed inward roads and made  
A brave surrender of all outward ways.  
And perhaps to some this was the most difficult thing:  
To sacrifice the practice and the pride,  
The outward show, the stuff of sainthood's garb,  
The forms of old, the ancient rites and rules,  
The robes of virtue and of piety.  
An unerring trust in the Mother's mighty work  
With never a thought for the profit or the fruit:  
Self-immolation of the being's all  
To a Real that bears the sovereignty of God—  
This was the issue and the high demand  
To make a Field of Matter's common soil  
The sure Repository for Higher Laws,  
A few to bear the full consent of earth  
And brave the downpour of the Higher Light.

In Buddhist decades of our yesteryears  
There was a time when Yoga was a game  
Played with the forces of the higher world,  
Or just a means for practices austere  
To liberate the individual soul,  
A means that sought its satisfaction's end  
Within the culmination of a Void,  
Its goal a cosmic Zero out of Time:  
Nirvana, the Universal Nothingness.  
These were the cast-off remnants of a law,  
That lingered yet within the current mind,  
That found their sanction in a world now gone.  
With the backward look of a fast evolving age;  
And some there were who strove here to maintain  
Their hold and footing in those days long past,  
Who wrestled with the memory of the years—  
Recusant rebels against the march of Time  
They would not change but held fast to their own,

## MOTHER INDIA

Their only virtue left—their stubborn mind,  
If stubbornness be virtue to the soul.  
The roads led inward, yet the play of life  
Found full expression in all outward forms.  
This was a Yoga for the kings of men,  
A bold Adventure, sovereign of the days  
When Janak sat upon a mortal throne  
In lavish splendour, rich with earthly joys  
Yet robed and crowned with heaven's authority  
And calm with an aristocracy of soul,  
The bright abundance of the generous heart  
Where Truth and Beauty found their natural ways,  
Where Lakshmi smiles upon the world around:  
This was the Yoga left in the lap of Time  
By those same Rishis of the Vedic Age,  
The royal sages of the eternal Laws,  
Who left their legacy to future dawns  
When mind would urge the growing of the soul  
And play its part upon the stage of life.  
Generous and broad the lines of golden light  
That swept the rising seas of consciousness,  
That tipped the foam-crests of this modern age  
With Golden Glories of a Vedic hour,  
Bridged Time and Timelessness with sunborn Truth  
And wedded ancient Bliss to minds of Light.  
Yet white simplicity grew brave within,  
One leaned upon the contacts of the soul,  
A simple 'touch', a sun-smile from the eyes  
Was all that was needed for the heart to know  
The true significance of man and light.  
One knew the progress by that inner flame,  
Which flame alone lit all the dark around  
And life was measured by sincerity.  
One followed only those same hidden roads  
Through which She led us silent and alone.

NORMAN DOWSETT

*(To be continued)*

## DEFEAT OF THE "I"

FORGOTTEN is the soul's eternal bliss—  
Death is my Lord, Desire my life-long mate;  
To fight I have learnt, to wound, to kill and hate;  
I embrace all misery with malicious kiss.

Love is unknown, humility I shun,  
Arrogant I remain in my castle to reign  
Supreme in dungeons dark with sorrow and pain,  
Steeped in Ignorance—knowledge I have none.

Evils of worlds adorn in me their king,  
Blind with might I mock at Destiny's face  
As here across the world my measured pace  
Circles the earth in an unbroken ring.

Enslaved am I to my own ego-might,  
Burdened with beauties felt but never known;  
I claim that freedom where the stars have grown  
And my defeat will end soul's dreadful night.

SAILEN

## BOOKS IN THE BALANCE

**Lorca:** by *Roy Campbell* (Bowes & Bowes, Cambridge. Pp 79. Price 6 sh.)

It is the bane of advanced civilization that literature becomes soft and flabby, second hand in reactions on account of the literary men being too much given to books than direct experience of life, and altogether lacking in the vigour and freshness of life. It is a great merit of Roy Campbell that he is not affected by this aesthetic lassitude of modern times. He is fresh and vigorous; he keeps his living interest in the active pursuit of life. Naturally the poets he most admires are those who share some of these characteristics of his. Again, living in Spain and admiring Spanish life and literature he is full of understanding of the great writers of Spain, ancient and modern; and hence his little book on Lorca in the series, *STUDIES IN MODERN EUROPEAN LITERATURE AND THOUGHT*, is an enthusiastically written and beautifully revealing work.

Federico Gracia Lorca had first attracted world-wide attention perhaps more by the fact of his murder than by his poems. In 1936 when his murder took place it was given out by the Communists that he was a martyr to their cause. But later studies of his life and work showed that he was no Communist though he had his own advanced ideas and aspirations, and soon the Communists abandoned him and even began attacking his work. But anyhow his name had attracted attention, and it came to be realized by good students that though he was a poet who did not vaporize about world affairs his writings, inspired by his own Andalusia, were so sincere and feelingful that they had a universal appeal. It was evident that though not one of the very greatest of world poets he was one who had genuine inspiration, with a heart that responded to truly poetic emotions, and a capacity for expression that gave quite a high quality to nearly all that he wrote.

Born near Granada in 1899, Lorca had a good university education. But his artistic tastes were so strong that he became associated with painters like Salvador Dali, poets like de Falla and others and he took to a life of poetry, painting and dramatic representations. In 1927 his paintings attracted attention, and in the next year he founded and edited *GALLO*. But his major work consisted of the plays he wrote and got on the stage. After travelling in America he settled down in Madrid, but he fled from there when the revolution broke out, and though he reached Granada he was murdered there in July, 1936.

Lorca has left behind a sufficient volume of poetry and drama to give him

a place of honour in European literature. Roy Campbell gives a fine estimate of his works with plenty of quotations of passages translated by Campbell himself. The vigorous, flowered language of the English poet adds to the pleasure of the book. Here is a typical passage: "Nearly all Lorca's flowery work is vertebrated with a sinewy spinal cord. However much he luxuriates externally into sparkling froth, it is the froth of good, strong champagne—with a body to it." Just to show that this is no empty praise a single passage may be quoted here from a poem of Lorca. He says:

The fragrant pomegranate! in it  
 A heaven seems to crystallise.  
 (In every seed a star is lit  
 In each red film a sunset dies).  
 It seems a tiny hive that drips  
 With live blood soaking through its mesh  
 Because the bees have formed its pips  
 Of women's mouths and kisses fresh:  
 And when it bursts, a thousand lips  
 Are laughing in its crimson flesh.

... ..

It is the ark of gems that blaze  
 Within the dim seen casque of gold.

Evidently this is no description of things in nature seen through the spectacle of books. And that is the quality of much of Lorca's writings, whether poetry or drama. Roy Campbell takes up all the important works of Lorca, analyses them, quotes plentifully from them, and makes very revealing comments on them. Consequently his book, though small, gives a comprehensive and clear account of the Spanish poet. How well this is done is shown by the fact that the reader becomes eager to read more of Lorca's work, and of Roy Campbell's too.

P. L. STEPHEN

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NOTE

The next issue will be a joint one of November and December and will be published on December 5.



# *Students' Section*

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## THE MOTHER'S TALKS

### "DIVINE DISGUST"

It is a "disgust" filled with all compassion. It is something which takes upon itself the wrong vibrations in others to cure them. Instead of throwing a wrong movement back upon the wrong-doer in a spirit of cold justice, it draws it within itself, absorbs it in order to eliminate it or transform it, reducing as much as possible its material consequences. You know the ancient legend of Shiva who has a dark patch upon his throat, because he swallowed all the poison of the world: it is a figure of divine disgust.

Naturally, the poison will not have the same effect upon the Divine as upon man. For there is an essential difference between a state of ignorance and a state of knowledge. Something untoward happens to you in your normal state of ignorance, it has a certain character and brings inevitably certain results: but the same thing happening to you in a state of knowledge will not carry the same effect. For example, take a very material thing, a blow, a right royal physical blow, well, if you are in a state of inconscience and ignorance, as you usually are, you will have to suffer the full consequence that depends wholly upon the force of the blow, who or what gave the blow and the helplessness of the object. But the same blow delivered in the same way by the same agent but upon a being who is conscious and full of knowledge, will produce instantly a reaction reducing the natural consequences to a minimum, even annulling the consequences altogether; for the reaction here is a reaction of knowledge, of light and not that of ignorance, of obscurity. On the moral level the action can be clearly noticed. For example, you can receive an emotional shock, not in egoistic blindness, that is to say, identifying yourself with it or drowned in it; you can hold it away from you, look at it in an objective manner, see what it is, note the nature of its vibration etc. etc. and then you put the light of your knowledge, the ultra-violet ray, as it were, of truth upon it. As a result, there comes a new disposition, the shock loses its effectivity. Even so, the physical

result of a physical blow can likewise be obviated. If that were not possible what would be the utility of the Divine taking upon himself the evil thing. Evil would continue in the same way and the world continue suffering in the same way. Precisely because the obscure vibrations are transformed into vibrations of light in the divine consciousness that the Divine takes upon and within himself all the ills of the world.

In the case of the physical occurrence, the knowledge I speak of is the inner knowledge of the body cells, their existence, composition, distribution and the knowledge of the consequences of the blow, its natural and expected effects. Also at the same time there must be the knowledge of what the cells should be like, how they ought to react to the blow. And the procedure adopted too is quite different from that of physical Nature which takes hours, days, months to repair a damage; the inner knowledge can do the thing immediately. This inner knowledge can be brought down from its highest source. Instead of the mere psychological knowledge, one can call down the supramental knowledge and focus it upon the part of the body in danger. If the elements of the body, the cells come under the influence of the force of truth and receive it, then there can be an immediate new ordering of the elements according to the higher law. That will bring about not only the cure from the blow received, the mending of the accident, but initiate a big progress in the general consciousness. This power to command the consciousness has no limit. If you have committed an error, even a grave error, and if you can yet call upon the consciousness of truth, this power of the supramental and allow it to work, it will give you an occasion to make a tremendous progress. In other words, never be discouraged if you have blundered, blundered even more than once. Only you must keep your will firm, and take sometime the unshakable resolution not to repeat. Rest assured you will in the end triumph over your difficulty.

18-8-1954

NOLINI KANTA GUPTA

## MY BOYHOOD UNDER SRI AUROBINDO

### DREAMS

SELF: I get all sorts of stupid dreams. I am sending you a description of a few of them. I am getting tired of them. Now I want to be conscious of my nights too. Kindly tell me how to free myself from such dreams.

SRI AUROBINDO: These are things of the past from the subconscious, or else old vital connections persisting in memory.

It takes time to get rid of them altogether. (4-4-1933)

SELF: In a dream I saw Bansidhar who had my time-piece. First he went straight to Arjava and then told me, "Now I will repair your time-piece". Does not this dream differ from the previous ones of memory? For I never asked him to do anything for me.

SRI AUROBINDO: But you have seen Bansidhar and Arjava and know that Bansidhar repairs time-pieces for the sadhaks. When all that comes up from the subconscious it arranges itself not as it is in life but in a confused and incoherent way because the coordinating mind is not at work—everything combines together in a haphazard way. (4-5-1933)

SELF: You recently wrote to me *a propos* incoherent dreams: "It depends on your attitude and consciousness; it is by bringing light down into the subconscious that these things can go." What exactly did you mean by "attitude"?

SRI AUROBINDO: Your aspiration to a less downward consciousness in sleep. (28-5-1933)

SELF: And which "consciousness" did you refer to here, the one that merely observes or the one that wills?

SRI AUROBINDO: It is the condition of your consciousness I spoke of—the more conscious you become, the more you will be able to have dreams worth having. (28-5-1933)

## MY BOYHOOD UNDER SRI AUROBINDO

SELF: When commenting on a dream of mine you wrote: "Probably some small vital forces brought in by the uncleanness." What do the last five words signify?

SRI AUROBINDO: The uncleanness entered in the dream by the keeping of the basket with mud in it. It was symbolic of some tamas and want of cleanness in the consciousness. (1-7-1933)

SELF: Is it helpful to study one's own dreams, unravel them and find out their meaning?

SRI AUROBINDO: Unless they are really significant dreams it is a waste of time. (7-7-1933)

SELF: In what way can our dreams prove useful?

SRI AUROBINDO: They show what the subconscious contains. (7-7-1933)

SELF: When I once asked you whether a certain dream was an attack by a vital force, you said "yes". And you added: "There are other dreams that are formations put in by the vital forces, but this is not one of them." Please elucidate the difference.

SRI AUROBINDO: I said this dream was an actual happening on the vital plane, not a formation. If somebody attacks you in the street, that is not a formation. But if somebody hypnotises you and suggests that you are ill—that suggestion is a formation put in by the hypnotiser. (21-7-1933)

SELF: Last night I saw in a dream a train passing at full speed, and a horse which was very faithful to me. What does the dream mean?

SRI AUROBINDO: The horse is a force acting for progress. The railway train at full speed means rapid progress. (16-8-1933)

SELF: In the last dream the Mother came on the terrace of her house and looked at me for a long time. Have such dreams any reality in them or are they like other common phenomena during sleep?

SRI AUROBINDO: It depends on the dream. It is sometimes a fact on the supraphysical plane, sometimes a representation in the mind of something that happened otherwise—sometimes only a formation. (22-8-1933)

## MOTHER INDIA

SELF: For the last three nights I have been absolutely unconscious in sleep and don't remember even my being's participation in any dreams. What happens at night to the being in these cases? Where does the subconscious go?

SRI AUROBINDO: The subconscious remains in the body. The being really goes out into different planes of consciousness, but its experiences are not kept in the memory, because the recording consciousness is too submerged to carry the record to the waking mind. (12-11-1933)

SELF: Are the forms seen in dreams subtle beings themselves or formations created by them?

SRI AUROBINDO: They are rather formations created from the subconscious. It is a hotchpotch of subconscious impressions thrown out on the vital plane. (6-12-1933)

SELF: In last night's dream I went to see the Mother. She was soon called away but she told me to come later and bring my brother and sister with me to receive sweets. Was this dream a mere subconscious formation or a vital plane experience?

SRI AUROBINDO: It looks like the former. But, perhaps, the brother and sister were only symbolic of parts of the being. (14-12-1933)

SELF: In an experience in the dream-state, we see the Mother sometimes. Is that form an emanation of her or is it her body itself?

SRI AUROBINDO: An emanation. How can her physical body be seen in a dream experience? (7-7-1933)

SELF: During the afternoon sleep I seem to come often into contact with the Mother. Is it the Mother who sends her emanation?

SRI AUROBINDO: Yes, or rather something of her is always with you.

(14-12-1933)

NAGIN DOSHI

## POEMS

### GIVE ME WINGS

GIVE me wings and I shall rise  
Like dreamless flames of burning white,  
And pluck the gold of waking skies  
That glimmer in a mute delight.

Light the heavens with azure bliss,  
Remove the darkness of the deep,  
Take me where the Spirit is,—  
My heart no more shall be asleep.

Angels shall not faster fly  
If you, O Soul, my pilot be;  
I shall find the Heavens high  
And magic doors of Eternity.

Touch me with your deathless fire  
And show me Truth's dire, steadfast eyes,  
Lift me from the doleful mire—  
O, give me wings and let me rise.

RANAJIT

## MOTHER INDIA

### THE MOTHER

AN endless birth from mute eternity  
Within thy Bosom dawns at thy Will supreme.  
Thy blissful touch on all the limbs of earth  
Bestows a thrill of joy, unknown, extreme.

In Thee is hushed, O Mother! our empty cry.  
We are thy stoic sons of the fire-pure way,  
Firm-poised in dreadful hours of earth's blind drag;  
No more the harrow of doom shadows our day.

Proceedest Thou across the path of Night  
With thy Flame-white Love to change its face and fate.  
Thou art the matchless fruit of thy cosmos' seed;  
In Thee the key of Transformation's gate.

CHINMOY

THE PROMISE

WHEN I asked the evening sky,  
"Hast thou brought me a message sublime?"  
Blazed with passion, the clouds went red  
And shed their tears.  
On the foam-blanchèd sea.

Then I, desperate, went to a tree,  
Bathed in the rays of the parting sun,  
And asked it,  
"Hast thou a message for me?"  
All its branches  
Kissed me in love  
And showed me the heavenward  
Untrodden path...

Marched I onward—  
Darkness fell  
Over the dolorous breast of the earth;  
The vista of her dreams  
Of myriad hues  
Was full with rapturous golden ruth:  
Spaceless, I was rocked  
In an eternal cadence  
Of light and night, of night and day;—  
Nay! I lay here unaware  
And drunk with the nectar  
That softly rolled  
Down the ethereal realms of delight!...



MOTHER INDIA

A swan from the unknown  
Bosom of vesper  
Came on its wings of ecstasy:  
Sweet, low, it spoke to the core  
Of my being,  
"Lo! the Dawn shall  
Bring thee light  
And the message of thy cherished Truth!"

*(Inspired by one of his Bengali poems.)*

PRITHWINDRA