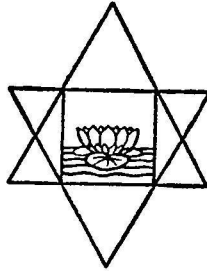


MOTHER INDIA

MAY, 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

"Great is Truth and it shall prevail"

CONTENTS

	<i>Page</i>
A DECLARATION BY THE MOTHER	... 1
"POLITICS, AS IT IS PRACTISED"	
(Some Extracts from Sri Aurobindo) 2
THE PAST SEERS AND THE SUPRAMENTAL TRUTH	
From Correspondence with Nirodbaran ... <i>Sri Aurobindo</i>	... 4
MIND OF LIGHT (A Poem) ... <i>K. D. Sethna</i>	... 6
THE TRANSFORMATION OF THE PHYSICAL	
CONSCIOUSNESS AND NATURE	
(Letters to a Disciple) ... <i>Sri Aurobindo</i>	... 7
MIND: ITS ACTIVITY AND DEVELOPMENT	
Some Letters to Nagin Doshi ... <i>Sri Aurobindo</i>	... 9
SRI AUROBINDO AND AESTHETICS ... <i>V. K. Gokak</i>	... 14
SRI AUROBINDO'S SAMADHI (A Poem) ... <i>Norman Dowsett</i>	... 19
THE MESSAGE OF 29th MARCH, 1954 ... <i>Sailen</i>	... 20
CONSCIOUSNESS AND THE BRAIN:	
A SCRUTINY OF SCIENTIFIC OPINIONS ... <i>K. D. Sethna</i>	... 21
SRI AUROBINDO: HIS PHILOSOPHY AND YOGA ... <i>A. B. Purani</i>	... 25
SRI AUROBINDO'S INTERPRETATION OF	
THE GITA ... <i>C. C. Dutt</i>	... 30
THE INTEGRAL YOGA OF SRI AUROBINDO	
CHAPTER XVI—THE LIGHT THAT FULFILS ... <i>Rishabhchand</i>	... 36
ILION—BOOK VII: THE BOOK OF THE GODS ... <i>Sri Aurobindo</i>	... 43

Students' Section

MOTHER'S TALKS ... <i>Nolni Kanta Gupta</i>	... 49
KEATS'S "ON FIRST LOOKING INTO CHAPMAN'S	
HOMER"—Some Critical Notes ... <i>K. D. Sethna</i>	... 52
WITH THE STUDENTS ... <i>Norman Dowsett</i>	... 55
POEMS:	
THE GRACE ... <i>Robi Gupta</i>	... 58
THE DAWN APPEARS ... <i>Ranajit</i>	... 59
REVERIES ... <i>Prithwindra</i>	... 60
THY MANIFESTATION ... <i>Ramraj</i>	... 61

A DECLARATION BY THE MOTHER

SRI Aurobindo withdrew from politics; and, in his Ashram, a most important rule is that one must abstain from all politics—not because Sri Aurobindo did not concern himself with the happenings of the world, but because politics, as it is practised, is a low and ugly thing, wholly dominated by falsehood, deceit, injustice, misuse of power and violence; because to succeed in politics one has to cultivate in oneself hypocrisy, duplicity and unscrupulous ambition.

The indispensable basis of our Yoga is sincerity, honesty, unselfishness, disinterested consecration to the work to be done, nobility of character and straightforwardness. They who do not practise these elementary virtues are not Sri Aurobindo's disciples and have no place in the Ashram. That is why I refuse to answer imbecile and groundless accusations against the Ashram emanating from perverse and evil-intentioned minds.

Sri Aurobindo always loved deeply his Motherland. But he wished her to be great, noble, pure and worthy of her big mission in the world. He refused to let her sink to the sordid and vulgar level of blind self-interests and ignorant prejudices. This is why, in full conformity to his will, we lift high the standard of truth, progress and transformation of mankind, without caring for those who, through ignorance, stupidity, envy or bad will, seek to soil it and drag it down into the mud. We carry it very high so that all who have a soul may see it and gather round it.

25-4-1954

“POLITICS, AS IT IS PRACTISED”

(Some Extracts from Sri Aurobindo)

...POLITICS is like that, a dirty and corrupting business full of “policy,” “strategy,” “tactics,” “diplomacy”: in other words, lying, tricking, manœuvring of all kinds. A few escape the corruption, but most don’t. It has after all always been a trade or art of Kautilya from the beginning, and to touch it and not be corrupted is far from easy. For it is a field in which people fix their eyes on the thing to be achieved and soon become careless about the character of the means, while ambition, ego and self-interest come pouring in to aid the process. Human nature is prone enough to crookedness as it is, but here the ordinary restraints put upon it fail to be at all effective.

(From a Letter)

*

*

*

...The modern politician in any part of the world...does not represent the soul of a people or its aspirations. What he does usually represent is all the average pettiness, selfishness, egoism, self-deception that is about him and these he represents well enough as well as a great deal of mental incompetence and moral conventionality, timidity and pretence. Great issues often come to him for decision but he does not deal with them greatly; high words and noble ideas are on his lips, but they become rapidly the clap-trap of a party. The disease and falsehood of modern political life is patent in every country of the world and only the hypnotised acquiescence of all, even of the intellectual classes, in the great organised sham, cloaks and prolongs the malady, the acquiescence that men yield to everything that is habitual and makes the present atmosphere of their lives. Yet it is by such minds that the good of all has to be decided, to such hands that it has to be entrusted, to such an agency calling itself the State that the individual is being more and more called upon to give up the government of his activities. As a matter of fact, it is not the largest good of all that is thus secured, but a great deal of organised blundering and evil with a certain amount of good which makes for real progress, because Nature moves forward always in the midst of all stumblings and secures her aims in the end more often in spite of man’s imperfect mentality than by its means.

“POLITICS, AS IT IS PRACTISED”

...Things would be much worse if there were not a field left for a less trammelled individual effort doing what the State cannot do, deploying and using the sincerity, energy, idealism of the best individuals to attempt that which the State has not the wisdom or courage to attempt, getting that done which a collective conservatism and imbecility would either leave undone or actively suppress and oppose.

(From Chapter IV of “*The Ideal of Human Unity*”)

* * *

All this insistence upon action is absurd if one has not the light by which to act. “Yoga must include life and not exclude it” does not mean that we are bound to accept life as it is with all its stumbling ignorance and misery and the obscure confusion of human will and reason and impulse and instinct which it expresses. The advocates of action think that by human intellect and energy making an always new rush, everything can be put right; the present state of the world after a development of the intellect and a stupendous output of energy for which there is no historical parallel is a signal proof of the emptiness of the illusion under which they labour. Yoga takes the stand that it is only by a change of consciousness that the true basis of life can be discovered; from within outward is indeed the rule. But within does not mean some quarter inch behind the surface. One must go deep and find the soul, the self, the Divine Reality within us and only then can life become a true expression of what we can be instead of a blind and always repeated confused blur of the inadequate and imperfect thing we are. The choice is between remaining in the old jumble and groping about in the hope of stumbling on some discovery or standing back and seeking the Light within till we discover and can build the Godhead within and without us.

(From “*Letters of Sri Aurobindo—Series I*”)

THE PAST SEERS AND THE SUPRAMENTAL TRUTH

(FROM SRI AUROBINDO'S CORRESPONDENCE WITH NIRODBARAN)

8-10-1935

MYSELF: You must have seen X's criticism on your *Lights on Yoga*. I thought there was quite a difference between divinisation (i.e. spiritualisation) and supramentalisation, the one being a step to the other.

SRI AUROBINDO: Yes, of course, but as I have never explained in these letters what I meant by supermind, these critics are necessarily all at sea. They think, pardonably enough, that anything above human mind must be supramental.

MYSELF: The writer says: "An extravagant claim in as much as it gives a lie to logic and also to the lives and experiences of past seers". Well, Sir?

SRI AUROBINDO: Well, I don't suppose the new race can be created by or according to logic or that any race has been. But why should the idea of the creation of a new race be illogical? ... As for the past seers, they don't trouble me. If going beyond the experience of past seers and sages is so shocking, each new seer or sage in turn has done that shocking thing—Buddha, Shankara, Chaitanya, etc. all did that wicked act. If not, what was the necessity of their starting new philosophies, religions, schools of Yoga? If they were merely verifying and meekly repeating the lives and experiences of past seers and sages without bringing the world some new thing, why all that stir and pother? Of course, you may say, they were simply explaining the old truth but in the right way—but this would mean that nobody had explained or understood it rightly before—which is again "giving the lie etc". Or you may say that all the new sages (they were not among X's cherished past ones in their day), e.g., Shankara, Ramanuja, Madhava were each merely repeating the same blessed thing as all the past seers and sages had repeated with an unwearied monotony before them. Well, well, but why repeat it in such a way that each "gives the lie" to the others? Truly, this shocked reverence for the past is a wonderful and fearful thing! After all the Divine is infinite and the unrolling of the Truth may be an infinite process or at least, if not quite so much, yet with some room for new discovery and new statement, even perhaps new achievement, not

a thing in a nutshell cracked and its contents exhausted once for all by the first seer or sage, while the others must religiously crack the same nutshell all over again, each tremblingly fearful not to give the lie to the "past" seers and sages.

MYSELF: What did you exactly mean when you wrote: "Our Yoga is not for our sake but for the Divine"? Is it something like the Vaishnava idea of absolute surrender, without even desiring to see Him, have *mlan* with Him, only give, give and give? A very sublime conception, but is it possible and practical?

SRI AUROBINDO: Quite possible and practical and a very rapturous thing as anyone who has done it can tell you. It is also the easiest and most powerful way of "getting" the Divine. So it is the best policy also. The phrase however means that the object of the Yoga is to enter into and be possessed by the Divine Presence and Consciousness, to love the Divine for the Divine's sake alone, to be tuned in our nature into the nature of the Divine and in our will and works and life to be the instrument of the Divine. Its object is not to be a great Yogi or a Superman (although that may come) or to grab at the Divine for the sake of the ego's power, pride or pleasure. It is not for moksha though liberation comes by it and all else may come; but these must not be our objects. The Divine alone is our object.

MYSELF: Why not write something about the Supermind which these people find so difficult to understand?

SRI AUROBINDO: What's the use? How much would anybody understand? Besides the present business is to bring down and establish the Supermind, not to explain it. If it establishes itself, it will explain itself—if it does not, there is no use in explaining it. I have said some things about it in past writings, but without success in enlightening anybody. So why repeat the endeavour?

MIND OF LIGHT

(“The Supermind had descended long ago—very long ago—into the mind and even into the vital: it was working in the physical also but indirectly through those intermediaries. The question now was about the direct action of the Supermind in the physical. Sri Aurobindo said it could be possible only if the physical mind received the supramental light: the physical mind was the instrument for direct action upon the most material. The physical mind receiving the supramental light Sri Aurobindo called the Mind of Light.”

—THE MOTHER)

The core of a deathless sun is now the brain
And each grey cell bursts to omniscient gold.
Thought leaps—and an inmost light speaks out from things;
Will, a new miracled Matter’s dense white flame,
Swerves with one touch the sweep of the brute world.
Eyes focus now the Perfect everywhere.
In a body changing to chiselled translucency,
Through nerve on fire-cleansed nerve a wine of the Vast
Thrills from heaven-piercing head to earth-blessing feet.
The whole sky weighs down with love of the abyss.
Deeper than death the all-penetrant rays take root
To make the Eternal’s sun a rose of the dust.

K. D. SETHNA

THE TRANSFORMATION OF THE PHYSICAL CONSCIOUSNESS AND NATURE

(Sri Aurobindo's Letters to a Disciple)

It is always the effect of the physical consciousness being uppermost (so long as it is not entirely changed) that one feels like this—like an ordinary man or worse, altogether in the outer consciousness, the inner consciousness veiled, the action of Yoga power apparently suspended. This happens in the earlier stages also, but it is not quite complete usually then because something of the mind and vital is active in the physical still or even, if the interruption of sadhana is complete, it does not last long and so one does not so much notice it. But when from the [mental] and vital stage of the Yoga one comes down into the physical, this condition which is native to the physical consciousness fully manifests and is persistent for long periods. It happens because one has to come down and deal with this part directly by entering into it,—for if that is not done, there can be no complete change of the nature. What has to be done is to understand that it is a stage and to persist in the faith that it will be overcome. If this is done, then it will be easier for the Force, working behind the veil at first, then in front to bring out the Yoga consciousness into this outer physical shell and make it luminous and responsive. If one keeps steadily the faith and quietude, then this can be more quickly done—if the faith gets eclipsed or the quietude disturbed by the long difficulty, then it takes longer but even then it will be done; for, though not felt, the Force is there at work. It can only be prevented if one breaks away or throws up the sadhana, because one becomes too impatient of the difficulty to go through with it. That is the one thing that should never be done.

22-4-1937

Apart from the individual difficulty there is a general difficulty in the physical earth-nature. Physical nature is slow and inert and unwilling to change; its tendency is to be still and take long periods of time for a little progress. It is very difficult for even the strongest mental or vital or even psychic will to overcome this inertia. It is only by bringing down constantly the consciousness and force and light from above that it can be done. Therefore there must be a

MOTHER INDIA

constant will and aspiration for that and for the change and it must be a steady and patient will not tired out even by the utmost resistance of the physical nature.

27-4-1936

It is just in the physical consciousness that it is difficult to keep the fire burning—the physical can easily follow a constant routine, but not easily maintain a constant living endeavour. Nevertheless it can after a time be made ready to do so. All help will be given you.

28-4-1936

The fulfilment of the individual is not the utmost development of his egoistic intellect, vital force, physical well-being and the utmost satisfaction of his mental, emotional, physical cravings, but the flowering of the divine in him to its utmost capacity of wisdom, power, love and universality and through this flowering his utmost realisation of all the possible beauty and delight of existence.

SRI AUROBINDO

(The Human Cycle)

MIND: ITS ACTIVITY AND DEVELOPMENT

(From Sri Aurobindo's Letters)

SELF: How does the real knowledge come? Can it descend even though the mind is not prepared?

SRI AUROBINDO: In some it does, others need a mental preparation.

8-7-1933

SELF: How shall I obtain mental development? Can it be had only by reading?

SRI AUROBINDO: A man may have read much and yet be mentally undeveloped. It is by thinking, understanding, receiving mental influences from his intellectual superiors that a man's mind develops.

9-7-1933

SELF: Where does the discriminating power of the mind or the psychic come from?

SRI AUROBINDO: It belongs to them by nature—only the mind can err, the psychic does not.

9-7-1933

SELF: You once said, "You have to *become conscious entirely* and not only in your mind." I fail to catch the exact meaning of the above underlined words.

SRI AUROBINDO: The mind is not the whole of you, there is also the vital and physical. If the mind is conscious and rejects but the vital or the physical do not, then you cannot get free.

21-7-1933

SELF: The mind can be easily conscious of a wrong movement. But I don't know how the vital and the physical can be conscious of it and reject it.

SRI AUROBINDO: There is a vital mind and a physical mind and there is too a power of feeling; and a consciousness. If there is a consciousness why should it be impossible for it to be conscious?

22-7-1933

SELF: Sometimes the mind feels the pressure and wants to be free from mental work and to remain at rest. Should I let it do that?

SRI AUROBINDO: If it did that, it might get the habit of inertia. You can do less mental work, if you like.

13-11-1933

SELF: How is the lower mind to be transformed or thrown away in order to awake the faculties of the higher mental ranges?

MOTHER INDIA

SRI AUROBINDO: How can you throw away the mind unless you want to disappear from manifested¹ existence? It has first to be made quiet and open to the higher consciousness and transformed by the descent of the higher consciousness. 9-9-1933

SELF: Does a quiet mind mean focussing attention one-pointedly on a particular subject? As for instance, while aspiring one should not allow any other thoughts than of the Divine in the quiet mind.

SRI AUROBINDO: A quiet mind is a mind that does not get disturbed, is not restless and always vibrating with the need of mental action..

What you are talking about is a concentrated mind, concentrated on something or on a subject. That is quite different. 14-9-1933

SELF: If one shuts out emotions, doesn't one become absent-minded?

SRI AUROBINDO: Absent-mindedness has nothing to do with emotions, it has to do with mind, memory and thought. 7-8-1933

SELF: Many things I come to hear, which, I feel, are better avoided, because they disturb me. (Should I resolutely avoid them?) And why am I disturbed by them?

SRI AUROBINDO: Because you pay attention to them and let them take hold of you.

Unless you wear cotton wool in your ears or shut yourself in a closed room, you can't help hearing all sorts of things. You have not to be affected by them or think about them, that is all. 8-8-1933

SELF: Does one build the vital world for oneself just like the mental world?

SRI AUROBINDO: It is the mind that builds, the vital tries to enjoy and possess the world of its desires. 31-8-1933

SELF: Does each human being live and move in a world of his own? Has it any relation with the world of another being?

SRI AUROBINDO: As he lives in a separative consciousness, he makes a mental world of his own out of his experiences of the common world in which all here live. It is built in the same way as that of others and he receives into it the thoughts, feelings of others, without knowing it most often, and uses that too as material for his separate world. 29-8-1933

SELF: Can the hostile forces attack us on the mental plane as they do on the vital plane?

SRI AUROBINDO: Yes—the physical mind especially can be made easily their prey—they can also invade the thinking mind. 5-9-1933

¹ The deciphering of this word is not certain.

MIND: ITS ACTIVITY AND DEVELOPMENT

SELF: Our sense mind is all the time active and leaping out. How is one to make it sit down for some time? How to hold it in one's hands, so to speak?

SRI AUROBINDO: It is not the sense mind that has to sit down; it is the mind that has to stop paying attention. 11-7-1933

SELF: What would be the true activity of the senses which at present are so subject to material things and cause all sorts of dualities of emotion (like, dislike etc)?

SRI AUROBINDO: It is to record the divine or true appearance of things and return to them the reaction of an equal Ananda without dislike or desire. 24-9-1933

SELF: The physical mind generally does not help one to come to the right decision. So it should not be allowed to play a prominent part in one's sadhana. But then, if one has to think and decide, where can one get an answer from?

SRI AUROBINDO: The physical mind can deal only with outward things. One has to think and decide in other things with the mind itself (buddhi), not with the physical part of it. 6-7-1933

SELF: What does the mental physical contain?

SRI AUROBINDO: Habitual thoughts and thoughts that are reflexes to the touch of external things. 27-11-1933

SELF: All sorts of thought-formations take place in my mind, acting this way and that. What is it that brings them about?

SRI AUROBINDO: It is something in the physical mind which is accustomed to such thoughts and so readily receives them from any force that chooses to put them in. 23-7-1933

SELF: This morning the mind—the physical mind, most probably,—became very obstinate and refused to concentrate or to receive light. Any reason for its being thus headstrong?

SRI AUROBINDO: That part of the being has no reason except its whims, its habits or an inclination to be tamasic. 12-12-1933

SELF: Sometimes a part of me gets drawn into noting how Mother puts her hand on a sadhak's head at pranam and also how long she keeps it there. This seems a stupid movement of the physical mind. Why does it go on?

SRI AUROBINDO: The physical mind is in the habit of observing things with or without use. 1-10-1933

SELF: Does the inquiry consciousness belong to the intelligence proper?

SRI AUROBINDO: There is no "inquiry consciousness", there is curiosity in the physical mind or a tendency to inquire in the thinking mind. 3-10-1933

MOTHER INDIA

SELF: In the Mother's *Conversations* I had read: "If the central being makes its surrender, these difficulties can be destroyed." So I thought: How easy it is to get the difficulties out of the system! What part of the mind is it that thinks like this?

SRI AUROBINDO: It is the physical mind that would like everything made easy. 8-7-1933

SELF: If the mechanical mind goes on in its rounds, it does not matter much. But when the thinking mind seems to get caught into them and identifies itself with them one feels troubled. What exactly is it that gets caught?

SRI AUROBINDO: That is the physical mind. The physical and the mechanical mind are closely connected. 29-11-1933

SELF: The little talk I have had today with some people has kept me thinking of them. Why does the thinking mind go on dwelling on them over and over again?

SRI AUROBINDO: Repetition is the habit of the mental physical—it is not the true thinking mind that does like that, it is the mental physical or else the lowest part of the physical mind. 22-11-1933

SELF: From this morning to this evening, I was in a somewhat passive condition—one part of me receiving all sorts of thoughts, the other part observing and sometimes rejecting but not very effectively. What is it in us that receives thoughts, like this?

SRI AUROBINDO: It is usually the mechanical mind if the thoughts are random—the physical mind, if they are connected. 9-8-1933

SELF: From where does the mechanical mind obtain its food?

SRI AUROBINDO: From things and impressions and old habitual thoughts or ways of thinking and feeling. 29-11-1933

SELF: For a long time now I have been trying to reduce the thoughts of the mechanical mind, but to little purpose. Can nothing be done about it? And when they are there, how is one to remember the Mother and offer one's being to her?

SRI AUROBINDO: You are probably paying too much attention to them. It is quite possible to concentrate and let the mechanical activity pass unnoticed. 28-11-1933

SELF: Is it not the function of the mechanical mind to be mechanical, just as it is that of the mind proper to perceive and conceive?

MIND: ITS ACTIVITY AND DEVELOPMENT

SRI AUROBINDO: Certainly not—it is mechanical because it has no light in it and goes on like a machine. If there were light, it would not be like that.

23-8-1933

SELF: Can the mechanical mind be filled with light by the inner being when the latter finds it necessary to change that mind's nature?

SRI AUROBINDO: When the higher consciousness takes hold of the mechanical mind, it ceases to be mechanical.

25-8-1933

SELF: When the thinking mind and the physical mind become quiet, does not the mechanical mind cease by itself to be mechanical?

SRI AUROBINDO: No. It has to be separately transformed.

25-11-1933

SELF: Is it natural that old impressions from the subconscious should come up or does it happen because some part of the being opens to them?

SRI AUROBINDO: The human like the animal mind lives largely in impressions rising up from the subconscious.

19-11-1933

NAGIN DOSHI

SRI AUROBINDO AND AESTHETICS

(Continued from the issue of March)

Author's Note

In an exposition of this kind of Sri Aurobindo's aesthetics, it would have been presumptuous to state in my own language the findings which came so naturally in the large utterance of Sri Aurobindo. I have therefore, endeavoured to state Sri Aurobindo's thought in his own words especially in sections which are concerned with his distinctive contribution to aesthetics. Quotation marks would be superfluous in sections which are all quotation. I have, therefore, reserved quotation marks only for statements which because of their importance, are reproduced in their precise form. My own additions are mainly expository and interpretative.

(10) THE CRITERIA OF ARTISTIC EXCELLENCE AND THE OVERHEAD CONSCIOUSNESS

THE question of the standards of artistic excellence is a moot-point in aesthetics. It has been answered by implication in the preceding sections. It has now to be developed with some amplitude.

Who fixes the value of works of art? "It is not the opinion of the general mass of men that finally decides," says Sri Aurobindo, "the decision is really imposed by the judgment of a minority and élite which is finally accepted and settles down as the verdict of posterity; in Tagore's phrase it is the universal man, *Viswa Manava*, or rather something universal using the general mind of man, we might say the Cosmic Self in the race, that fixes the value of its own works." (p. 273. *Letters*: 3rd series). One should not read in the reference to the élite a viewpoint similar to that of T. S. Eliot's defence of a minority culture in his *Notes Towards the Definition of Culture*. Sri Aurobindo does not imply that culture should be entrusted to those qualified by the fortune of birth but that to judge of poets is the faculty of poets.

The beautiful is not always great. Racine is the complete poetic artist, but Shakespeare's is the greater poetry, though he sinks to flatnesses which Racine would have abhorred. Racine does not touch the superhuman level of creation. Again, perfection is not greatness. In the valuation of whole poems, Shelley's *Skylark* may be considered greater than his "I can give not" etc. because of

its greater range. But it is not more perfect." The absolute is the absolute and the perfect perfect, whatever difference there may be in the origin of the inspiration. (p. 140. L. 3.). All poetic superiority is not "summed up in the word greatness. Each kind has its own best which escapes from comparison and stands apart in its own value." (p. 122. L. 3.).

It is also desirable to remember that the greatness of poetry as poetry does not necessarily depend upon the level from which it is written. Shelley has more access to the inner Mind than Milton, but he is not the greater poet. Some, in fact, would believe that Shelley is a greater poet than Milton, because of this very quality. Sri Aurobindo first disabuses the minds of persons who are likely to think that he would consider mystical poetry as greater simply because it is mystical. "When I say that a line comes from a higher or overhead plane or has the Overmind touch I do not mean that it is superior in pure poetic excellence to others from lower planes." (p. 92. *Letters*. 3rd series.).

But Sri Aurobindo makes it clear elsewhere (p. 154-155 *Letters*: 3rd series) that the proposition of the equality of absolute perfection of different kinds applies only to all that has some quintessence of the highest poetry in it. A sovereign technique or speech or metrical movement is not enough. There is also the quality of the thing said which counts for something. From the point of view of language and rhythm, a lyric of Anacreon is as good and perfect poetry as anything in Aeschylus. But the question of elevation or depth or of the intrinsic depth of the thing said does enter into our consideration of poetry. "From the point of view of greatness, one perfection may be said to be greater than another" (p. 140. L. 3.). Theocritus is always perfect, but he does not have the height, depth and breadth of Aeschylus.

Let us consider satirical poetry. It has often been regarded as inferior in essential quality to the epic or other higher kinds of creation. Can we equal together the best from poetry of a lighter kind with that which has a high seriousness or intention,—the mock epic with the epic?

It has therefore to be admitted that the elevation from which the inspiration comes may, after all, matter, provided the one who receives it is a fit and powerful instrument. But we must remember that inspiration is not the only factor in the making of a poet. "For any considerable creation there must be a background of life, a vital rich and stored or a mind and an imagination that has seen much and observed much or a soul that has striven and been conscious of its strivings. These are needed, or one or other of them." (p. 51. *Letters*: 3rd series). Emotional sincerity, poetical feeling, a mastery over language and a faculty of rhythm perfected by a knowledge of the technique of poetic and rhythmic expression,—these are necessary for a poet along with the power of inspiration. The Overhead intervention has, at present, achieved nothing more than occasional

lines or passages or a new kind or manner which may have larger contents and a higher or richer suggestion but is, as yet, imperfectly developed. Overhead poetry is not, as yet, intrinsically superior to mental poetry in the essential elements of poetry, word and rhythm. This is so because there has been no general or massive descent of the Overmind.

The greater aesthesis of the Overmind would bring in a greater form on the overmind level itself. But at present the intervention of Overmind has to take mind, life and matter as its medium and field and accept their fundamental law and method. Its own can enter in only initially or partially. The pure intuition entering into the human mind becomes the mental intuition or the vital intuition or the intuition working unconsciously in physical things; it gets limited, deflected or misinterpreted by the mind or the life. The Overmind has to use a language which has been made by mind, not by itself. It can only strain and intensify this medium as much as possible for its own uses. Perhaps what Mallarmé and other poets were trying to do was some fundamental transformation of the mental law and method; but that incurs the danger of being profoundly and even unfathomably obscure. The intervention of the higher consciousness also takes different forms. It may bring in, not the higher consciousness itself but a substitute for it, an uplifted movement of mind which gives a reflection of the character of the overhead movement. There can also be a mixed movement, a movement of mind with flashes from overhead. Finally, there can be the thing itself in rare descents. The greatest lines or passages in the world's literature have this Overmind touch or power.

The Overmind is a more utter revelation of the Absolute. It is perfection in a greater kind,—in all parts and details and, consequently, in all its creation. It may be argued that this idea of a greater perfection is purely illusory; that each plane and its creations are beautiful in themselves and have their own perfection; and that there can be no superiority of one to the other. What, for instance, can be greater or more perfect than the glories and beauties of matter,—the golden splendour of the sun, the perpetual charm of the moon, the beauty and fragrance of the rose? Life and mind cannot surpass them. It is the same with Life. The lion in its majesty and strength, the antelope in its grace and swiftness, the peacock with its plumes,—these and other glories of Life have a perfection that thinking man cannot excel. He is inferior to the animals in their own qualities, superior only in his mind, his thought. But his thought does not make him, as he is, stronger than the lion or tiger. Mind also has its own types of perfection and its own absolutes. What intrusion of Overmind or Supermind could produce philosophies more perfect in themselves than the systems of Shankara, Plato or Plotinus, poetry superior to Homer's or Shakespeare's, music more superb than the music of Beethoven

or Bach? The same may be said of structural feats like the pyramids or inventions and manufactures like the great modern steamships and the motor car. It may thus be maintained that, though there is evolution, it only creates new forms, brings in new principles of consciousness, new ingenuities of creation but not a more perfect perfection.

The preceding paragraph is a cursory summary, almost in Sri Aurobindo's own words, of the case against his own theory of cosmic evolution. Sri Aurobindo has himself stated it in the strongest possible terms. The consideration that he shows for points of view other than his own is itself indicative at once of the measure of his greatness and his confidence in the validity of his own postulates. His reply to this objection is equally emphatic:

"Evolution has not been merely something material...it has been an evolution of consciousness, a manifestation of it out of its involution and in that a constant progress towards something greater...a greater and greater perfection and perhaps finally to an absolute of consciousness which has yet to come. ...The mental consciousness of man is greater in its perfection, more progressive towards the absolute than the consciousness of the animal, and the consciousness of the overman, if I may so call him, must very evidently be still more perfect, while the consciousness of the superman may be absolute. No doubt, the instinct of the animal is superior to that of man and we may say that it is perfect and absolute within its limited range. ... Man's consciousness has an infinitely greater range. ...The Overmind when it comes will decrease whatever deficiencies there are in human intelligence and the supermind will remove them altogether; they will replace the perfection of instinct by the more perfect perfection of intuition and thus replace the automatism of the animal by the conscious and self-possessed automatic action of a more luminous gnosis and finally, of an integral truth-consciousness." (p. 146-47. *Letters*: 3rd series)

But it is not as though this evolution consists merely in the annexation of new frontiers of consciousness. It also brings with it a revaluation of what is already evolved,—a transvaluation of values: "It is quite true that the beauty of material things is perfect in itself and you may say the descent of Overmind cannot add to the glory of the sun or the beauty of the rose. But...the rose as it is is something evolved from the dog-rose or the wild rose and is largely a creation of man whose mind is still creating further developments of this type of beauty. Moreover, it is to the mind of man that these things are beautiful, to his consciousness as evolution has developed it, in the values that his mind has given to them, to his perceptive and sometimes his creative aesthesis: Overmind, as I have pointed out, has a greater aesthesis and, when it sees objects,

MOTHER INDIA

sees in them what the mind cannot see, so that the value it gives to them can be greater than any value that the mind can give. That is true of its perception, it may be true also of its creation, its creation of beauty, its creation of perfection, its expression of the power of the absolute." (p. 147-48.)

The Overmind level has therefore within it this essential power of transformation, however scanty and interrupted its expression may have been in poetry up to now. One can see how it is possible for the Overmind to open poetry to the expression of new ranges of vision, experience and feeling. It can bring in new rhythms and a new intensity of language. "But so long as it is merely an intervention in mind, we cannot confidently claim more for it." (p. 156. L. 3.). If the Overmind would not only intervene but descend, it will create a poetry "higher, larger, deeper and more consistently absolute than any which the human past has been able to give us." (p. 157.)

(To be continued)

V. K. GOKAK

SRI AUROBINDO'S SAMADHI

O blessed earth! O free high-hallowed ground!
O radiant resting place! O Silence rare!
O blessed the soul who here on earth has found
Peace in the bosom of this atmosphere.
Here day will ever dawn, the Sun will shine
Through all the spaces of eternity;
Here blooms the rose more fair upon this shrine
Than in the fields of our mortality.
Here Silence carves Thy Presence out of Love,
Where love is fragrance offered to Thy throne—
In the depths below and in the heights above
New-Truth awakens from a vast Unknown.

And these streams of silent souls that come and go
Are remembrance steeped in Thy secret ebb and flow.

NORMAN DOWSETT

THE MESSAGE OF 29th MARCH 1954

“When knowledge is fresh in us, then it is invincible; when it is old, it loses its virtue. This is because God moves always forward.”

SRI AUROBINDO

On this terrestrial plane of evolution no being can claim to have arrived at his final stage of perfection. Knowledge is a force, but we do not possess the Supreme knowledge. The knowledge we have suits well the present status of our being, but as we climb up higher and higher on the ladder of evolution we must acquire fresh knowledge required to guide us in the advanced state of our being. It is knowledge which produces and determines our work; consequently for a new work a fresh knowledge suitable for the advanced work must be there.

Though God is the Transcendent One who is beyond all manifestation, yet He is present in the material plane, and is passing here through various stages of evolution. And it can be said that He has not yet achieved His final perfection.

God in the world is not yet born; rather, God has not yet manifested Himself fully in the terrestrial plane.

If we expect to see God here, we must see Him manifested in a human being. Every individual is a vehicle for manifesting an aspect of God.

God is in us; and He is raising Himself from the Inconscient in order to return again to His Superconscient state—but here upon this earth. He is always going forward, unfolding progressively infinite vistas of knowledge of which we can become conscious if we keep contact with our inner Divinity.

The old knowledge was necessary and served its purpose; now fresh knowledge must reveal itself for helping us in our onward march; for God in us cannot remain stationary in one status of Being, or satisfied with a partial knowledge acquired at any rung of the evolutionary ladder.

SAILEN

CONSCIOUSNESS AND THE BRAIN

A SCRUTINY OF SCIENTIFIC OPINIONS

(Continued from the issue of March)

Supplementary Note

IN *Science News* 30, a reply based on part of the very first essay in this series was given by the author to Mrs. Knight's article in *Science News* 25 which had sought to prove invalid the famous argument of the interactionists against the epiphenomenalists or what Mrs. Knight called "the brain-dependence school", that the position of the latter is self-contradictory. Mrs. Knight had quoted and criticised McTaggart's brief formulation of the argument: "If materialism is true, all our thoughts are produced by purely material antecedents. These are quite blind, and are just as likely to produce falsehood as truth. We have thus no reason for believing any of our conclusions—including the truth of materialism, which is therefore a self-contradictory hypothesis." Mrs. Knight's contentions have been exhaustively examined by us and attacked from various angles and found to be untenable. In *Science News* 30, they were touched upon from only one angle which concerned itself with her analogy between the thinking brain and the electronic calculating machine. The editor of that periodical invited Mrs. Knight to defend her position. She wrote the following:

"In my article in *Science News* 25 I made two main points, viz. (1) we accept results worked out by electronic calculators, though the functioning of the calculators is unaccompanied by consciousness, and (2) the laws of logic may have their counterparts in the functioning of the human brain, just as mathematical laws have their counterparts in the functioning of the calculator. Mr. Sethna takes exception to both points. He says that I have 'overlooked the precise reason why electronic machines can calculate correctly and give us truth'—viz. that they 'work according to a man-made plan'; and that I have failed to see that, if I draw an analogy between the calculator and the human brain, I must logically conclude that the brain, like a calculator, was designed by a conscious being.

"To this I can only reply that (1) I did not 'overlook' the first point—I took it for granted; and (2) no analogy is perfect, and I do not want to press this particular analogy nearly as far as Mr. Sethna supposes. He says that I 'equate' the brain and the calculator, but this was certainly not my intention. To take a parallel case—in lecturing on the sense of sight, I sometimes find it helpful to

draw analogies between the eye and the camera, but this does not mean that I 'equate' the two.

"I agree that if I regarded the brain/calculator analogy as perfect I should have to infer that the brain was designed by a conscious being. But I do not regard the analogy as perfect, and I have no need to draw this inference, though most theologians would do so. I am content to say that the machine is a product of design and the brain (so far as we know) of evolution; but that instructive analogies can still be drawn between them.

"Towards the end of his letter Mr. Sethna says that 'truth...is absolutely irrelevant to...a brain-process or any other physical activity by itself.' If Mr. Sethna means by this that a brain-process cannot be true (or false), this statement is indisputable. But if he means that a brain-process cannot *give rise to beliefs* that are true (or false), he is begging the question."

Well, what shall we say about this reply of Mrs. Knight's? Like the article itself it seems to miss the fundamental issue—a strange thing for a mind like hers which has shown its acuteness and fairness in several articles on psychological themes.

She says that all analogies are imperfect and so there is no invalidity in her analogy just because it is not perfect. But how can she defend her analogy when the central point of contact, which would make it pertinent in spite of its imperfection, is not there? The electronic machine, in spite of its difference from the human brain, can be compared to the latter for the purpose of making the brain-dependence hypothesis plausible, if this machine does not positively imply man's mind acting the logician and mathematician independently of it and making "true results" possible to it. Since this machine does positively imply independent mental activity of a logico-mathematical order, we can only compare certain modes of mechanism in the calculator and the human brain, but never argue that the truth-quality of our beliefs can come about independently of mental antecedents. The whole controversy revolves round this truth-quality and that quality's independence of mental antecedents is precisely what the analogy forbids us to assert and what she tries to project from the calculator to the brain.

Here attention must be drawn to Mrs. Knight's peculiar presentation of my thought with regard to her analogy. While my discussion revolved round what I have called truth-quality, she makes it out to have been about design by a conscious being. She puts me in the same box as "most theologians" and thus subtly discredits my position. My letter was not couched in the somewhat naive and crude terms in which "most theologians" might state their case: I never implied that just as man directly designs and constructs the electronic calculator God directly designs and constructs the brain. The question

of the brain having been the work of a conscious being was not brought in at all: what was asserted was the necessary presence of a mental determinant independent of the brain and acting upon and affecting cerebral processes. Of course, ultimately the other question cannot be shirked and the answer to it is definitely in the affirmative, but it can be tackled and decided on a more philosophical as well as more scientific plane than that of common theology.

I do not deny that the brain is a product of evolution and not exactly of design in the sense in which the electronic machine is. But I do not see that the sole alternative to calling it an evolutionary product is to follow "most theologians". All depends on our view of evolution. This is not the place to enter into an examination of evolution-concepts. But a brief comment must be made on the suggestion emanating from Mrs. Knight's remark: "I am content to say that the machine is the product of design and the brain (so far as we know) of evolution." The suggestion appears to be, in the present context, that the activity, which happens in conjunction with brain-events, of seeing logical implications and arriving at a logically true conclusion is a product of wholly blind forces at work during the long stretches of evolutionary history. The suggestion is but the epiphenomenalist theory applied to the process of evolution and blandly ignores the self-contradictoriness inherent in that theory and extending to this application. To conceive of the brain as a product of utterly blind forces is to overlook the very essence of "truth" in the logical sense. There may be some point in asking whether, for instance, the stomach which appears to do purposive action is not really the outcome of blind evolutionary forces: the entire Darwinian hypothesis was possible because the theory of natural selection showed that such a question could be asked without immediate self-stultification. But, with logical truth, there is always an "ought" involved: what conclusion *ought* to be drawn from certain premises? This "ought" calls for a real and not merely apparent weighing of alternatives and choice of direction—a process *sui generis* because of a sense of obligation to the ideal of correct inference. If a conclusion is reached simply because we *must* reach it according to predisposing physical factors, logical truth has no meaning. Here is not only mind but also something beyond sheer determinism whether physical or mental. If wholly blind forces have gone to the making of this process in evolutionary history and are still at work behind it, we must stop discussing whether anything is logically true or false, whether the brain-dependence hypothesis is logically a truth or a falsehood.

It is by its forgetting the distinction I made, in my reply, between a "must" and an "ought" that the closing para of Mrs. Knight's defence is as unsatisfactory as her plea for her analogy. She is thinking of truth and falsehood in some other sense than the logical which is here being discussed. Let me, at the risk of a little tediousness, dwell on this point. In the logical sense beliefs are true if they

have been reached by seeing the logical implications of premises and coming to a reasoned conclusion. If only a brain-process gives rise to any beliefs, there is no real seeing of logical implications. What appears to be such seeing is nothing save an illusion, for the beliefs in question are dictated by the inexorable "must" of physical effects from physical causes without the intervention of any "ought". There need have been no reasoning at all: the conclusions had to be what they are by a blind physical necessity, not a seeing logical obligation. So it is meaningless to speak of beliefs logically true arising from a brain-process or any material activity by itself.

Mrs. Knight does not seem to grasp this and so she thinks I am begging the question. If I say that even a *seemingly* reasoned belief cannot arise from a brain-process, I may be begging the question whether mental phenomena can be caused by physical phenomena. But if a reasoned belief is only seemingly reasoned, we knock all significance out of logical truth. That is what McTaggart bases his argument on, for in that case materialism which itself purports to be a reasoned belief can be logically neither true nor false or just as likely to be false as true, being merely an effect inexorably determined by physical necessity. Where is any begging of the question in my assertion? I am only clarifying the question—and unless one realises what the question is, there can be no talk about beliefs logically true or false.

I am puzzled why Mrs. Knight has quoted me as saying: "truth...is absolutely irrelevant to...a brain-process or any other physical activity." Quoted thus, I seem to supply the ground for a possible difference between saying that a brain-process cannot be true (or false) and saying that a brain-process cannot give rise to beliefs that are true (or false). If she had quoted my actual words: "Truth or correctness in the logical sense—the only sense concerned in the discussion", my point would have been evident, for then a belief arising from a brain-process would have been seen immediately as resulting from a mechanical "must" and not a logical "ought" and therefore falling outside the realm of logical truth with which we are concerned. Indication of the specific sense in which "truth" has to be taken here would at once rule out the possibility of thinking that a brain-process can give rise to true (or false) beliefs or else that such a process can lead to beliefs true rather than false. The suggestion is unfairly made that I am indulging in a *petitio principii*.

The lack of substance and relevance in Mrs. Knight's rejoinder cannot help underlining our thesis against epiphenomenalism, which we have developed through four articles based on both philosophical reasoning and scientific evidence.

(Concluded)

K. D. SETHNA

SRI AUROBINDO: HIS PHILOSOPHY AND YOGA

(This is a continuation—from our March issue—of the first of the talks given by A.B. Purani at two successive meetings held under the auspices of the Calcutta University. Dr. S. C. Chatterjee, M.A. Ph.D., Lecturer in Philosophy, Calcutta University, presided.)

THE second thing to which I would draw your attention this evening is Sri Aurobindo's explanation of the origin of Ignorance. How is it that an Infinite, All-knowing, All-gracious God, a Divine Consciousness has given to us a world full of limitations, darkness, suffering, evil and conflicts? How does All-knowledge succeed in creating Ignorance? That is the difficulty for philosophers and thinkers.

What is Ignorance? The general conception is that it is something against Knowledge. The explanations given by the old schools of Metaphysics and those given by modern psychology do not satisfy us. The explanation that the Master gives has two sides: one is from the side of the human being and the other is from the side of the Divine. That is to say, how could the human being see and feel Ignorance in its original working and how would the Divine see and feel the Ignorance. How does man with a human mind manage to become ignorant? Apart from the general Ignorance so far as man is concerned, it is very simple. To understand the basic principle, let us take a man in one out of his multiple activities. What happens to his other activities, what happens to his other personalities? Do they become non-existent? Do they become unreal? Are they illusory? When he becomes for some time concentrated exclusively on a particular activity, a particular personality, then he appears to be oblivious of his other activities and personalities for the time being. We can then say in one sense that when he is a Professor he is ignorant of his other personalities. When he is conscious of himself as somebody related to a friend, he is ignorant of his other selves. Now imagine an infinite, a perfect, a divine Consciousness. It is that which puts itself forward in different innumerable manifestations. Suppose it has projected itself as the vegetable kingdom with all the potential differentiations of that kingdom. In those potential differentiations, one is the Banian tree. Now the whole vegetable world which is the common background of the Banian tree is put behind and only certain qualities—i.e. powers—are brought to the surface which give to the Banian tree its individuality. This gives to it limitations but also its individuality. Here,

the consciousness has limited itself though it is sure of its other effectuations which are also equally possible to the infinite consciousness in infinite ways. So, in order to bring about the individuation which is a play of variation on a vast cosmic and infinite background the Infinite puts forward a portion of Itself like multiple facets of a diamond of infinite size. A particular aspect of the diamond is put in front and the rest of it is withdrawn from view. The Being is conscious only of the portion that is put in front, and is ignorant of the whole of the rest, in one sense. This exclusive concentration of consciousness on multiple points of individuation has created what the human mind feels to be the phenomenon of Ignorance. The human being is conscious exclusively of his own personality which is in front and of the rest of his Infinite Being he is oblivious.

But how does it appear to the Divine Consciousness, to the Supreme? The Master explained in one of his letters to Mon. Maurice Magre, a French writer and a member of the French Academy, that this is a question to which no rational reply can be given. An analogy in the language of the mystics can only explain it. In Mathematics there is the theory of probabilities. Let us take help of that: image an infinite Being, Consciousness, Power, Delight capable of an infinitely varied dynamic manifestations. One of the mathematical possibilities of it would be to face the opposite of itself. The situation would be something like this: Cannot the Infinite, All-knowing, All-conscious become inert, unconscious, nescient? and if it becomes dynamically its own opposite, would it be able to come back to its own original Self? Can it revert to its original status? Now, suppose that it starts this process of reverting to itself and succeeds. Then the status to which it arrives would, course, be divine—and in that sense, original—but it would not be a repetition of creation; it would be a rediscovery of its own Self in terms altogether absent in its original status except—as I said before, as probabilities. Being probabilities of the Divine they are charged with the power to realise themselves. And they would realise themselves,—when the one opposite possibility would be realised then it would be altogether a new discovery to the Divine of His own Self. That is to say, the realisation of it would be an altogether unprecedented creation in the midst of earth-consciousness.

The original Ignorance is a result of exclusive concentration of consciousness on a common background trying to put in front innumerable variations. An amorphous, undistinguished, indeterminate commonality has necessitated this exclusive concentration in order to create this play of personality, this individuation which has made it possible for the Nescience to seek more and more light. Thus seen, Ignorance can be said to be the hand-maid of Knowledge. It is Ignorance that makes us feel cramped with the limitations of ego

and presses us to seek Knowledge. Ignorance is itself acting as an instrument leading to greater and greater Knowledge.

This second contribution of Sri Aurobindo to Philosophy is unique in the philosophical world. As time passes, thinkers will find that this explanation of the origin of Ignorance is not only a new one but the right one.

The third thing that I now come to is the Master's contribution to the realm of Psychology. What did the Master contribute to this realm? The present-day psychology has increased tremendously our knowledge of the unconscious and subconscious regions of mentality. It is good to know about them but the consciousness of man is not acting only from the subconscious and the inconscient. Sri Aurobindo is the first to clarify the whole psychology of man and give an integral picture of it. The present-day psychologists only take man and his mentality as their field of investigation. They have not the clue to the connection that links man not only to the animal but to the material world and its evolution. Sri Aurobindo connected the physical human consciousness with the dark material consciousness carrying with it the load of its inertia. It was he who showed the connection between the vital of man and the animal consciousness around in the cosmos. He showed that as the Cosmic energy was evolutionary in its movement there are further grades of evolution beyond mind possible to man. They are more important for the future of man. He has established not merely the possibility, but brought about a dynamic and actual link with the higher levels of consciousness towards which human psychology has got to evolve: he worked out for man the psychology of the Superconscient. Among European philosophers it was Bergson who urged that intuition was the real faculty which moved man, and not his intellect. He says reason or intellect is not the faculty for acquiring knowledge but a faculty for action. There is a great deal of difference here between the intuition of Bergson and that of Sri Aurobindo. It is easy to see that even in the ordinary life of man his intellect is often overpassed and other faculties come into play. The intellect of man has already been trying to stretch beyond itself. The rays of the Superconscient have been pushing down all along the course of life of humanity. It has created now the possibility of man's final emergence into an intuitive consciousness or even perhaps an Overmind Consciousness. There has all along been an affirmation of the Superconscient but its psychology was always scattered in mystical outbursts of souls intoxicated either with the Light or the Delight of the Supreme. The psychology of the Superconscient was made clear by Sri Aurobindo for the first time in human history. He showed how the intuitive consciousness would act from beyond mind, on the mind, on the vital being, on the nervous and even on the physical being. He showed how it would influence the life of humanity,—individual and collective, and also how

it would influence the body of man. It is the most rational exposition of the psychology of the Superconscient that Sri Aurobindo has given to mankind today. Psychologists of the present day have limited themselves to the mental and rational consciousness of man. They deal with psychology on the basis that man will always and for ever continue to remain a mental being. They have been living in placid ignorance of the Superconscient. All their knowledge is vitiated by this severe limitation. Humanity will learn from Sri Aurobindo the first great lines of action of the Superconscient on the organised psychology of man. So we have the psychology of the Inconscient, the Conscient and the Superconscient and Sri Aurobindo's contribution towards the psychology of the Superconscient is an original contribution to the field of present and future psychology.

In proposing a vote of thanks to the speaker, Dr. S. C. Chatterjee said:

“Ladies and gentlemen, you have listened to the discourse which has been as much illuminating as it has been lively and vigorous. The distinguished speaker has thrown much light on some of the salient features of the thought that Sri Aurobindo, as one of the greatest manifestations of the Divine Light in this mundane universe, has bestowed on the pressing problems of humanity. Man has been seeking light in various directions of his life and activity but it is seldom that man attains that light which will illumine the darkest regions surrounding him. But here, in Sri Aurobindo, we have the fountain-head of a magnificent Light that spreads over many regions of human thought, human life and human progress. His discourse in the realm of cosmic evolution has given us a very comprehensive and catholic account of the process of evolution from the start to what it is leading up to. The future is envisaged by Sri Aurobindo and, following him, by the learned speaker in a way which inspires confidence even in the minds of those who have lost or are about to lose faith in the divine destiny of man. We are grateful to the present speaker for the illuminating exposition that he has given of Sri Aurobindo's vision of evolution.

“Next, with regard to the problem of Ignorance, that perhaps is the hardest nut in the world of philosophy,—it is on this rock that many a system of philosophy has perhaps foundered and many still are to founder in future. We have here a new light on a very old problem of human thought. Why has the Perfect, Infinite, Omniscient and Omnipotent Being taken on such inconscient, subconscient, semi-conscient, limited and fragmentary forms which we find round about us and in the flow of which we have been ourselves caught up?

It is Ignorance which is at the basis, at the root of all this. But it is not that mean, hopeless, despondent aspect of Reality which it has been made out to be. It is after all something which is contributory and essential, and which adds glory and greatness to the infinite capacity and possibility that are there in the Life Divine. That is something which gives us much encouragement to tackle the problems of our times.

“Lastly, he comes to the future, i.e. Sri Aurobindo’s psychology of the future of mankind or, I should say, the psychology of the potentiality of mankind. His psychology with regard to the past is no doubt very important but his psychology with regard to the future of man is more important, more encouraging and more illuminating. It is more inspiring—it is something which inspires the most despondent soul, which creates faith in the mind of the faithless and raises hope in the mind of the hopeless. If we are to follow the course of life with some faith in ourselves, with some confidence in ourselves, that can be only according as we are confident that the goal after all is not something visionary and fleeting, something unattainable, but something which is inevitable and so, one day, would be as real as the present facts that surround us at the present moment.

“Now, we are all thankful for this illuminating, vigorous discourse and we expect something more in the same way and in the same form tomorrow.”

(To be continued)

SRI AUROBINDO'S INTERPRETATION OF THE GITA

(Continued from the issue of March)

We have now a clear conception of the Gita's teaching of divine love and devotion in which Knowledge, Works and the heart's longing merge into one. This teaching, the supreme word of the scripture—a brief reiteration of what has been taught so far—appears at the commencement of the tenth chapter, "I will speak this supreme word to thee from my will for thy soul's good, now that thy heart is taking delight in Me." Arjuna, whose heart is full of ecstatic love for his teacher, promptly accepts the word and asks for a direct way of seeing God in all things in Nature. What is needed is a liberating Knowledge, a knowledge of the Supreme in all his aspects. This is emphasised in the following verses. "Hearken to my highest word again." "Neither the gods nor the great Rishis know any birth of me. I am their source and beginning in every way. He who knows me as the unborn without origin, he, free from delusion, is released from all sin." This knowledge opens the way to a greater Yoga—the Yoga of the Will and Intelligence. "The wise hold me for the birth of each and all, hold each and all as developing from Me its action and movement, and so holding they love and adore Me and I give them the Yoga of the understanding by which they come to Me and I destroy for them the darkness which is born of the ignorance." These results are bound to come from the very nature of the Knowledge and the divine (Aishwara) Yoga that proceeds from it—for the light of knowledge has become one with the ecstasy of god-love. This assurance too Arjuna accepts, but, says Sri Aurobindo, "a desire for a deeper constant spiritual realisation has been awakened in his heart and will." And he cries out, "Thou alone O Purushottama, knowest thyself by thyself." He knows that this all-important knowledge cannot be attained by the unaided human faculties. He tells Krishna, "Narada and all the Rishis say this of thee; so do the divine seers Asita, Devala and Vyasa. Not only these sages, but Thou thyself sayest it to me." And what the Teacher himself says, the disciple holds for the truth. But he now asks for that permanent inexpressible spiritual realisation of which the mental is only a preliminary or a shadow and without which there cannot be a complete union with the Eternal. Arjuna sees that the acceptance of Vasudeva as all is helping him to get over the perplexity of his half-opened mind; still he asks the teacher for a complete enumeration of the sovereign powers of his becoming.

"Thou shouldst tell me," he says, "of thy divine self-manifestation in thy sovereign power of becoming, all without exception, nothing omitted,—the Vibhuti by which thou pervadest these worlds and peoples. How shall I know thee, O Yogin, by thinking of thee everywhere at all moments and in what permanent becoming should I think of thee?" Here, says Sri Aurobindo, "we get an indication of something which has been developed later on by Shaktism and Vaishnavism in a greater intensity of vision, man's possible joy of the Divine in the world-existence, the universal Ananda, the play of the Mother, the sweetness and beauty of God's lila."

Krishna agrees to set forth the forms of his manifestation in the world, but warns Arjuna that his reply is bound to be incomplete as these forms are innumerable. Each form symbolises some sovereign power of becoming, Vibhuti. "Yes," he says, "I will tell thee of my divine Vibhuti, but only in some of my principal pre-eminences and by way of indication so that thou canst most readily see the power of the Godhead. For there is no end to God's self-extension in the universe—*Nasti anto vistarasya me*. Throughout the tenth chapter of the scripture there is a summary of the principal indications of the divine force in the world. These are set forth in a certain order. The enumeration is prefaced by the statement, "I am the soul immanent in all becomings, I am their beginning, middle and end." If our vision is not blurred by difference in quality and quantity, we are bound to see all things in the manifest world as Vibhuti of the one all-pervading Soul—the Yogin of the great Yoga. Krishna says that he is Time, the essence of the whole cosmic movement—*Akshayah Kālah*. Not only that. He is the all-snatching Death and he is the birth, too, of all that shall come into being. I am, says that Godhead, Vishnu among the Adityas, Siva among the Rudras, Prahlad among the Titans and so on and on, naming the Airavat elephant, Uchchaisravas the horse, Kamadhanu the cow, Vasuki the snake, the Sun, the Moon, the Ocean, the Himalayas. Sri Aurobindo's summing up is brilliant. "Then among all these living beings, cosmic godheads, superhuman and human and subhuman creatures and amid all these qualities, powers and objects the chief, the head, the greatest in quality of each class is a special power of the becoming of the Godhead." How sweeping the enumeration of Krishna is, would appear from the following verses. "I am mind among the senses...I am the qualities of mind and character and body and action. I am glory and speech and memory and intelligence and steadfastness and forgiveness, the energy of the energetic and the strength of the mighty. I am resolution and perseverance and victory ..I am the letter 'A' among letters...the sacred syllable OM among words... I am all the powers of the human being and all the energies of the universe and its creatures." Then there are those in whom the powers of the

Divine rise to the utmost heights, His special Vibhuti—“I am Rama among warriors, Krishna among the Vrishnis, Arjuna among the Pandavas...I am Ushanas among the seer-poets, I am Bhrigu among the great Rishis...I am Vyasa among the sages.” And the Teacher winds up thus. “But what need is there of a multitude of details for this knowledge?...Take it thus, that I am here in this world and everywhere, I am in all and I constitute all.”

Sri Aurobindo discusses the theory of the Vibhuti in a separate essay. That elaborate discussion is somewhat outside the scope of this article. We give here a short extract which contains the pith of this essay. “The vision of the World-Purusha and the divine command to action is the culminating point to which he (Arjuna) was being led. That is already imminent; but without the knowledge now given to him though the Vibhuti-Yoga it would not bring with it its full meaning.” Arjuna himself is a Vibhuti, he is a friend and disciple of Krishna, his chosen instrument in the great struggle for the establishment of the kingdom of righteousness. The all-important self-knowledge has been given to him, he is getting ready for the vision of the *Vishva Purusha*, which will fully equip him for receiving the Supreme Secret. Krishna appears unto his disciple as the universal Purusha, Time the destroyer, in response to the latter’s request. Arjuna now knows that the divine Conscious Soul is the hidden Truth of all cosmic appearances. But he is not satisfied yet, “he would see too the very form and body of this Godhead, if that be possible. ...He asks of the Master of the Yoga to discover his very imperishable Self to the eye of Yoga.”

But this form is not visible to the human eye. The Teacher gives to his disciple the divine vision saying, “By your own eye you cannot see that form of mine. I give you the divine eye. See my Aishwara Yoga”. It is the sight of the One in the Many, the Many in the One,—and all are the One. The Supreme Form is then made visible. The language of the Gita is superbly poetic. Sri Aurobindo’s rendering makes it still more so. “It is that of the infinite Godhead whose faces are everywhere and in whom are all the wonders of existence, who multiplies unendingly all the many marvellous revelations of his being, a world-wide Divinity seeing with innumerable eyes, speaking from innumerable mouths, armed for battle with numberless divine uplifted weapons, glorious with divine ornaments of beauty, robed in heavenly raiment of deity, lovely with garlands of divine flowers, fragrant with divine perfumes. Such is the light of this body of God as if a thousand suns had risen at once in heaven. The whole world multitudinously divided and yet unified is visible in the body of the God of Gods.” Amazed and thrilled, Arjuna gazed at the vision and, with bent head and joined hands, spoke thus. “I see all the gods in thy body, O God, and different companies of beings, Brahma the creating lord seated

in the Lotus, and the Rishis and the race of the divine Serpents. I see numberless arms and bellies and eyes and faces, I see thy infinite forms on every side, but I see not thy end nor thy middle nor thy beginning. O Lord of the universe, O Form universal, I see thee crowned and with thy mace and thy discus, hard to discern because thou art a luminous mass of energy on all sides of me, an encompassing blaze, a sun-bright fire-bright Immeasurable. Thou art the supreme Immutable whom we have to know, thou art the high foundation and abode of the universe, thou art the imperishable guardian of the eternal laws, thou art the sempiternal soul of existence." But the vision is not only gorgeous and resplendent, it is terrifying, an image of the grim Destroyer. Arjuna, awe-struck, describes it at some length. We shall give some idea of that description in a few lines. "This Godhead who embraces the world with his numberless arms and destroys them with his million hands, whose eyes are suns and moons, has a face of blazing fire and is ever burning up the whole universe with the flame of his energy....The kings and the captains and the heroes on both sides of the world-battle are hastening into its tusked and terrible jaws and some are seen with crushed and bleeding heads caught between its teeth of power." Arjuna cries out in fear and anguish, "Salutation to thee, O thou great Godhead, declare to me who thou art." Why does Arjuna, the hero of the heroes, quail before this dread vision? It is human nature. The mind of man, naturally, turns away from the Terrible and he hides his head in the sand as does an ostrich hoping that, not seeing, it may not be seen. The frailty of the human heart shirks an encounter with the whole truth, the awful truth, the dreadful truth. The pacifist, the sentimental idealist, the raw religionist, is ever seeking to twist away from the stern facts of life. But Krishna is not going to countenance any feeble shrinkings in his friend. He must know "God the bountiful and prodigal creator, God the helpful, strong and benignant preserver as also God the devourer and destroyer." Therefore the Teacher says in reply to the question of his disciple:—"I am Time, the waster of the peoples, arisen and increased here with a will to destroy the nations. Even without thee, all these warriors shall cease to be, who are standing arrayed in the two armies. Therefore arise and get the glory; conquer thy foes and enjoy an opulent domain. By Me, and by none other, already are they slain, do thou become the occasion only. Fight on, thou shalt conquer thy foes." Sri Aurobindo's application of the truth unfolded by Krishna is brilliant: "The nation or community or race which shrinks too long from destroying and replacing its past forms of life, is itself destroyed, rots and perishes and out of its debris other nations, communities and races are formed. By destruction of the old giant occupants man made himself a place upon earth. By destruction of the Titans the gods maintain the continuity of the divine law in the cosmos." Krishna assures his

warrior of ultimate victory, but also warns him that he would gain nothing by abstaining from the fight, for in spite of his abstention God's work of destruction would still be accomplished. Sri Aurobindo wants us to read this admonition with Krishna's words to Arjuna in the last chapter, "That which in thy egoism thou dreamest, saying, I will not fight, vain is this thy resolve. Nature shall yoke thee to thy work."

The dread destructive aspect of the Divine, when explained thus by the Teacher, reassures the disciple and with a new understanding he cries out, "Salutation to thee a thousand times over and again, and yet again salutation in front and behind and from every side, for thou art each and all that is. Infinite in might and immeasurable in strength and action, thou pervadest all and art everyone." Suddenly he remembers that he has known this supernal Being familiarly as a man, as a friend and as a comrade and as a relation and himself asks for pardon, "For whatsoever I have spoken to thee in rash vehemence, thinking of thee only as my human friend and companion, O Krishna...not knowing thy greatness, in negligent error or in love and for whatsoever disrespect was shown by me to thee in jest, on the couch and the seat and in the banquet, alone or in thy presence, I pray forgiveness from thee, the immeasurable." Arjuna is thankful that he has had a glimpse of God as the dire destroyer, but still he is eager to see that other form, "I would see thee even as before, crowned and with thy mace and thy discus. Assume thy four-armed shape, O thousand-armed, O Form universal." Krishna's beloved friend knows that the Benign is the truth hidden behind the Terrific. In answer to his prayer the Godhead resumes his form of grace and love and sweetness and beauty. But at the same time, he stresses the true meaning of the other mighty Image which he is about to veil, saying, "This that thou hast seen is my supreme shape, my form of luminous energy, the universal, the original which none but thou amongst men has yet seen. I have shown it by my self-Yoga." It is only for the rare highest souls to see. For realising this form at once cosmic and supracosmic, Krishna says, "Be a doer of my works, accept Me as the supreme being and object, become my bhakta, be free from attachment and without enmity to all existences; for such a man comes to Me." The World-Vision thus brings out the supreme importance of bhakti in the Yoga of the Gita.

The twelfth chapter, which is very short, deals with the path of devotion. Arjuna has just been face to face with the widest universal Godhead, and he is called upon to be one with Him by Knowledge and Works and Devotion. Wishing to have his doubts cleared, he asks, "Those devotees who thus by a constant union seek after thee, and those who seek after the unmanifest Immutable, which of these have the greater knowledge of Yoga?" Krishna's reply

is clear and emphatic, "Those who found their mind in Me and by constant union, possessed of a supreme faith seek after Me, I hold to be the mostly perfectly in union of Yoga." The orthodox Yoga of Knowledge envisages as its goal *Sāyujya*, immergence in the One Infinite. The Yoga of love and devotion aims at *Sālokya* and *Sāmīpya*, eternally dwelling in God or near him. The Yoga of Works leads to *Sādrishya*, oneness in power of being and nature with God. The Gita embraces all three in a catholic integrality and fuses them into one divine freedom and perfection. Into this oneness with Purushottam, Krishna invites his disciple.

(To be continued)

THE INTEGRAL YOGA OF SRI AUROBINDO

CHAPTER XVI

KNOWLEDGE—THE LIGHT THAT FULFILLS

PART III

ACCORDING to ancient Indian tradition there are three principal grades or categories of spiritual knowledge: atmajnana or knowledge of one's individual soul or self; Brahmajnana or knowledge of the universal and transcendent Self or Spirit; and Bhagavatjnana or knowledge of the Divine, the sole and supreme Being. It is essential to keep this distinction well in mind lest we confound the ultimate values of the spiritual life and fail to appreciate the comprehensive greatness of the aim of the Integral Yoga of Sri Aurobindo.

Ordinarily—and this is a fairly general acceptance—by knowledge one understands the knowledge of the individual soul or self, atmajnana. “Know thyself” is considered the highest counsel of wisdom. In Sankhya, knowledge of the Purusha or the individual self is regarded as the ultimate knowledge. Jainism, taking the Sankhyan standpoint, preaches as the highest knowledge *Kevalajnana* or knowledge of the naked soul, divested of all karmic covering and resplendent with its own light. There have been many teachers who have taught nothing but the knowledge of the soul as the end and summit of all spiritual attainment. If a man has had an experience of his soul as an immortal entity, independent of mind and life and body and blissfully free in its immaculate purity, we look upon him as a perfect jnani or one who has attained to the supreme knowledge. We hardly pause to think that there can be a knowledge higher and fuller than that of the individual soul. It is true that “our primary aim in knowledge must be to realise our own supreme Self more than that Self in others or as the Lord of Nature or as the All; for that is the pressing need of the individual, to arrive at the highest truth of his own being ...” It is also true that when a man has realised his soul, he can very well know what Nature is in her phenomenal working. The knowledge of Prakriti or Karma follows as a natural corollary to the knowledge of the inner Purusha. But there still remains the possibility of a higher knowledge and a still higher. Atmajnana effects our liberation from the trammels of Nature, but does not

necessarily impart a knowledge of the essential unity of all existence and of the divine origin of this fettering and deluding Nature. The human soul has to transcend its individuality and realise the oneness of all existence; for, an indivisible oneness is the ultimate and fundamental term of existence. And beyond this unity, it has to widen into That which is at once one and multiple and yet transcendent of both its unity and its multiplicity, and in which we perceive the transcendental divine aspect and original term of what we here know as Prakriti. The knowledge of that highest Ground of all existence and the omnipresent Reality of our being is, therefore, the completest knowledge to which we have to aspire and attain.

Beyond the knowledge of the soul there is the knowledge of the universal and transcendent Self or Spirit, Brahmajnana. The individual soul, emancipated from the meshes of Nature and cured of all self-identification with her passing modes, may, if it will, enter into the infinite unity and immutability of the Brahman. This is a realisation which is higher and wider than the final goal of the Sankhya and Jainism. One realises in it the unity of the universal Self and may even rise from it into an experience of the utter Transcendence—calm, still and ineffably profound. In the beginning this Self may appear as static, inactive and impersonal, sustaining but not participating in the world movement; and in the intense absorption of our concentration on it, we may come to look upon the world as unsubstantial and shadowy, a mere procession of phantasmal forms. We may even come to regard it as illusory and false, maya, mithya. But if we do not stop short at this realisation of the immobile immanence of the Brahman, we shall see that it constitutes all things and beings and “dwells within all of them, governing all their motion.” “As the ether both contains and is, as it were, contained in the jar, so this Self both contains and inhabits all existences, not in a physical but in a spiritual sense, and is their reality.”¹ This Brahman we have to become and experience in the triple way referred to in the Upanishad: we have to see all existences in the Self, the Self in all existences and the Self as having become all existences. All names and forms, all forces and energies and their tangled movements in the world have to be seen and embraced as the one Brahman in Its multiple self-representation, and not ignored or spurned as phantasmal or false. This is, indeed, a high and profound experience that may seem to most of us to be the very crown of all spiritual realisation—the experience of the Brahman everywhere, in all things and at all times, *sarvam khalvidam Brahma*. It gives a knowledge which is essentially perfect and definitive, a knowledge which does not divide existence into two, Spirit and Matter, or Reality and Illusion,

¹ “*The Synthesis of Yoga*” by Sri Aurobindo

but reconciles and fuses all apparent contraries and antinomies into an integral unity. "The knowledge that leaves a yawning gulf between the two can be no ultimate knowledge, however logical it may seem to the analytical intellect or however satisfactory to a self-dividing experience. True knowledge must arrive at a oneness which embraces even though it exceeds the totality of things, not at a oneness which is incapable of it and rejects it. For there can be no such original unbridgeable chasm of duality either in the All-existence itself or between any transcendent Oneness and the All-existent. And as in knowledge, so in experience and self-fulfilment. The experience which finds at the summit of things such an original unbridgeable chasm between two contrary principles and can at most succeed in overleaping it so that it has to live in one or the other, but cannot embrace and unify, is not the ultimate experience."¹

But though this knowledge of the omnipresent Brahman is essentially and fundamentally comprehensive and complete, yet it is not integrally and dynamically perfect. It is jnana, but not Vijnana; and the fusion of the two is the supreme knowledge: the general and essential knowledge and the particular and specific knowledge; the knowledge of the One and the knowledge of the All, the Many; the knowledge of the eternal silence and that of the eternal dynamism—an all-embracing, all-explaining knowledge of Truth, Satyam, Ritam. The knowledge of the Brahman liberates, exalts and illumines, but it does not fulfil the manifold aspiration of the human soul. For the knowledge that fulfils we have then to ascend to the Supreme, the Divine, the Being of our being, the Para Purusha of the Upanishad or the Purushottama of the Gita. The deepest mystery of existence, the ultimate truth of our soul's individuality, the teleological significance of its descent into the material world, the secret of our heart's love for the Divine and its yearning for His infinite joy and love and beauty, the hidden sense of our aspiration for perfection and fulfilment—all these are resolved and revealed in the all-illuminating Light of the supreme knowledge, the knowledge of the Parama Purusha. What is felt as somewhat vague and imprecise, specifically incomplete and incomprehensible, in the knowledge of the Brahman, acquires definiteness, clarity and completeness in the light of this highest knowledge. It explains how and why the Absolute Brahman, needing nothing, desiring nothing, has assumed all these myriad names and forms and consented to be limited and divided—even though apparently or phenomenally—and pass through pain and suffering and death. It reveals the Divine, not only in the unchanging essence of His existence, but also in all the principles of His being, *tattwatah*. It reveals Him as the supreme Person, the original truth and Archetype of our pheno-

¹ "The Synthesis of Yoga" by Sri Aurobindo

menal personality, and yet also the eternal Impersonal, bound neither by His personality nor by His impersonality. It reveals Him as at once Nirguna or transcendent of all qualities and Anantaguna, possessor of infinite qualities. It reveals Him as the silent and passive Brahman and at the same time the transcendent Creator and Master of the universe.

There is a general conception that the Unmanifest is the most transcendental term of the supreme Reality and that Akshara or the Immutable is the ultimate truth of existence. But the Upanishad is categoric on the point—and the Gita fully concurs with it—that the supreme Purusha is beyond the Unmanifest (*avyaktattu Parah Purushah*), and superior to the Akshara (*Aksharadapichottamah*). There is nothing higher than the Purusha—*Purushanna Param kincht*; He is the ultimate and highest goal, the sole Refuge of all. This is a truth that has to be kept constantly in view in the Integral Yoga, if we are to conquer the strong, traditional tendency of the Indian mind for the unmoving peace and passivity of the Akshara. The knowledge of the Akshara is called Vidya (*sa Vidya yaya tadaksharamadhigamyate*), and the knowledge of the kshara Purusha or the phenomenal universal being is called Avidya; but the integral knowledge of the Paramatman comprehends both Vidya and Avidya and yet transcends them, as the Upanishad rightly holds.

The integral knowledge is the knowledge of Sachchidananda, not only of His Sat or existence, or of His Chit or Consciousness-Force, or of His Ananda or bliss, each taken separately, but of the inalienable unity of the three, the trinity. By this knowledge we know Sachchidananda as an infinite and eternal self-conscious Existence, which the orthodox Vedantin envisages as the final object of his spiritual endeavour; we know Him as an infinite and eternal Consciousness-Force, which is the goal of Tantra and the Yoga of divine works; and we know Him as an infinite and eternal Self-bliss, Ananda, which is the supreme status, *param pada* or *param dhama* of the yoga of love and devotion. The integral knowledge embraces all these aspects and attributes of the Divine even while it exceeds them all in its giant sweep of the unthinkable and relationless Absolute. It is an all-reconciling, all-harmonising knowledge which reveals to us Sachchidananda in all His statuses and on all the planes of existence. Possessed of it, we can live simultaneously in the consciousness of the Absolute Transcendent and of the Absolute manifested in all universal relations; in the Impersonal and in Him who has revealed Himself as all these personalities; in That which is beyond all qualities and in the complex play of infinite qualities; in the fathomless silence beyond, where nothing stirs, and in the ceaseless hum and whirl of the cosmic energies. We realise the Divine as the Supreme Person, the sempiternal Being who knows all, sanctions all, governs all, contains, upholds and informs all as the Param Purusha and at

the same time executes all knowledge, will and formation as Prakriti. We see Him as “one Existence, Being gathered in Itself and Being displayed in all existences; as one Consciousness concentrated in the unity of its existence, extended in universal Nature and many-centred in innumerable beings; one Force static in its repose of self-gathered consciousness and dynamic in its activity of extended consciousness; one Delight blissfully aware of its featureless infinity and blissfully aware of all feature and force and forms as Itself; one creative Knowledge and governing Will, supramental, originitive and determinative of all minds, lives and bodies; one Mind containing all mental beings and constituting all their mental activities; one Life active in all living beings and generative of their vital activities; one substance constituting all forms and objects as the visible and sensible mould in which mind and life manifest and act just as one pure existence is that ether in which all Consciousness-Force and Delight exist unified and find themselves variously. For these are the seven principles of the manifest being of Sachchidananda.”¹ It is only the integral knowledge that can make us know and identify ourselves both statically and dynamically with all these multiple ways of being, bhavas, of the Divine.

This integral knowledge is, according to Sri Aurobindo, the supramental gnosis which unites in itself not only the knowledge of the timeless and featureless Absolute and the knowledge of its manifestation in Time and Space, but also includes a full and perfect knowledge of the basic principles and processes of that manifestation. It is at once the plenary self-vision and world-vision of the Divine; and since it is a knowledge by identity—as all true spiritual knowledge must needs be—it gives us a dynamic union with the Divine and with all existence. This integral knowledge arms us with the supreme Will and Force of the Divine not only for our release from ignorance and suffering, but for the transformation of our whole nature into the divine Nature. All other spiritual knowledge, if practised with a sustained sincerity, can lead to the liberation of the soul from the lower nature, but cannot transform that nature. It is only the supramental knowledge, the knowledge of the creative Truth-Consciousness, that can radically transform and divinise it. It liberates the soul and it liberates the nature, and, by leading this double liberation into the infinite perfection of the Divine, bestows upon man the highest, the widest and the most harmonious fulfilment of his whole being. It makes him live in the infinite Truth-Consciousness of the Param Purusha and yet work in the world as an unfettered instrument of His Light and Force and Bliss.

¹ “*The Synthesis of Yoga*” by Sri Aurobindo

THE OBJECT OF KNOWLEDGE

The above consideration will have made it abundantly clear that in the Integral Yoga the object of knowledge is the Divine Himself, the supreme Being, the Purushottama or the Chatushpada Brahman, and not only the Akshara or the Avyakta or the personal God of certain religions. We aspire to realise the sole and sovereign Reality that is at once transcendent and immanent, static and dynamic, timeless and self-deployed in Time, One and self-figured as many, as described by the Upanishad:

“He, the Divine, the formless Spirit, even He is the outward and the inward and He the Unborn; He is beyond life, beyond mind, luminous, Supreme beyond the Immutable.

“Life and mind and the senses are born from Him and the sky, and the wind, and light, and the waters and earth upholding all that is.”¹

The utmost transcendence, the most comprehensive universality and the all-directing individuality of the Divine Presence in the hearts of beings, are all summed up in the Paramatman or Para Purusha whom we seek and adore with the integrality of our being. He delivers us from the darkness of the Ignorance, lifts us into the infinite plenitude of His Truth-Consciousness and, transforming us into His own divinity, fulfils the deepest aspiration of our whole being. He is our Master and Lover and Friend and Helper and Guide, who holds us in His embrace of beatific Love even when He uses us as manifesting channels of His supernal glory upon earth. He unites us with Himself in the closest union of rapt ecstasy in which we become completely identified with Him in all the ways of His being, and yet lets us keep up a certain unimagined, mysterious difference-in-identity which permits of the sweetest relations of a termless, unutterable love. He is at once the Lord of our being and the Architect of our becoming.

This is the knowledge at which we aim in the Integral Yoga—a knowledge which not only purifies and illumines and liberates, but transfigures and fulfils our whole being and accomplishes the object of our soul's birth into the material world.

In the Integral Yoga the sacrifice of knowledge (jnanayajna) mounts from experience to experience, from plane to plane of the spiritual consciousness, passing now through the thrilled love and light of the psychic being, now through the calm and silence of the Self, and now through the stupendous surge and heave of the universal dynamism; arrested by nothing, attached to no realisation however exalting or alluring, however reposeful or transporting,

¹ Mundaka Upanishad

MOTHER INDIA

but piercing all veils, shattering all obstacles and triumphing over all oppositions and resistances, it mounts with an ever-increasing intensity of aspiration towards what the Rigveda describes as “Vishnu’s step supreme”, or:

“A Permanent, a Truth hidden by a Truth where the Sun unyokes His horses. The ten hundreds (of His rays) come together... That One.”

An unfathomable love is the glowing heart of this integral knowledge, a fiery rapture its inexhaustible life-force and a tireless, manifestational work of the Divine its objective expression in the material world.

The object of knowledge in the Integral Yoga is a double achievement: a constant and integral union with the Para Purusha on all the planes of consciousness and, as a dynamic result of that union, a perfect fulfilment of His Will to self-revelation in Matter.

RISHABHCHAND

ILION

BOOK VII: THE BOOK OF THE GODS

(In our April issue, part of this Book from Sri Aurobindo's epic in hexameters composed according to his own theory of true English quantity was published. But between the first ninety lines and the rest an editorial Note was inserted mentioning that some passages were missing. By a slip of calculation it was said that sixty-eight lines were not available. The gap was, in fact, much bigger. But fortunately the missing pages have been discovered and it is from them that the sixty-seven lines reproduced as "a fragment" in the April number of "The Advent" were found to have been taken. We are here repeating these lines together with all the others—one hundred and sixty-eight in all—which had been believed to describe further the gathering of the gods and to open the conference among them with the protest and decision of Ares, the war-god. To bring out the connection better we are preceding the new passages by the last five lines from the closing part of the old where the response of the gods to Zeus's summons is pictured, and we are adding to the new passages the seventeen lines already published, which make the remainder of the speech of Ares. The rest of Book VII will appear in the next issue.)

Some from the heavens above us arrived, our vital dominions
Whence we draw breath; for there all things have life, the stone like the ilex,
Clay of those realms like the children of men and the brood of the giants.
There Enceladus groans oppressed and draws strength from his anguish
Under a living Aetna and flames that have joy of his entrails.
Fiercely he groans and rejoices expecting the end of his foemen
Hastened by every pang and counts long Time by his writhings.
There in the champaigns unending battle the gods and the giants,
There in eternal groves the lovers have pleasure for ever,
There are the faery climes and there are the wonderful pastures.
Some from a marvellous Paradise hundred-realmed in its musings
Million-ecstasied, clumbed like flames that in silence aspire
Windless, erect in a motionless dream, yet ascending for ever.
All grew aware of the will divine and grew near¹ to their Father.

¹ The original which seems scratched out in favour of "grew near" was "were drawn."

MOTHER INDIA

Grandiose, calm in her gait, imperious, awing the regions,
Hera came in her pride, the spouse of Zeus and his sister.
As at her birth from the foam of the spaces white Aphrodite
Rose in the cloud of her golden hair like the moon in its halo.
Aegis-bearing Athene, shielded and helmeted, answered
Rushing the call and the heavens thrilled with the joy of her footsteps
Dumbly repeating her name, as insulted and trampled by beauty
Thrill might the soul of a lover and cry out the name of its tyrant.
Others there were as mighty; for Artemis, archeress ancient,
Came on her sandals lightning-tasselled. Up the vast incline
Shaking the world with the force of his advent thundered Poseidon;
Space grew full of his stride and his cry. Immortal Apollo
Shone and his silver clang was heard with alarm in our kingdoms.
Ares' impetuous eyes looked forth from a cloud-drift of splendour;
Themis' steps appeared and Ananke, the mystic Erinnys;
Nor was Hephaestus' flaming strength from his father divided.
Even the ancient Dis to arrive dim-featured, eternal,
Seemed; but his rays are the shades and his voice is the call of the silence.

Into the courts divine they crowded, radiant, burning,
Perfect in utter¹ grace and light. The joy of their spirits
Calls to eternal Time and the glories of Space are his answer:
Thence were these bright worlds born and persist by the throb of their
heart-beats.

Not in the forms that mortals have seen when assisted they scatter
Mists of this earthly dust from their eyes in their moments of greatness
Shone those unaging Powers; nor as in our centuries radiant
Mortal-seeming bodies they wore when they mixed with our nations
Then the long youth of the world had not faded still² out of our natures,
Flowers and the sunlight were felt and the earth was glad like a mother.
Then for a human delight they were masked in this denser vesture
Earth desires for her bliss,—thin veils, for the god through them glimmered.
Quick were men's days with the throng of the brilliant presences near them:
Gods from the wood and the valley, gods from the obvious wayside,
Gods on the secret hills leaped out from their light on the mortal.
Oft in the haunt and the grove they met with our kind and their touches
Seized and subjected our clay to the greatness of passions supernal,

¹ This word is cancelled in the manuscript in order to be replaced by another, but nothing has been put.

² The original version, not quite cancelled, was. "had yet faded not".

ILION

Grasping the earthly virgin and forcing heaven on this death-dust.
Glorifying human beauty Apollo roamed in our regions
Clymene when he pursued or yearned in vain for Marpessa;
Glorifying earth with a human-seeming face of the beauty
Brought from her heavenly climes Aphrodite mixed with Anchises.
Glimpsed in the wilds were the Satyrs, seen in the woodlands the Graces,
Dryad and Naiad in river and forest, Oreads haunting
Glens and the mountain-glades where they played with the manes of our lions
Glimmered on death-claimed eyes; for the gods then were near us and clasped
us,

Heaven leaned down in love with our clay and yearned to its transience.
But we have coarsened in heart and in mood; we have turned in our natures
Nearer our poorer kindred; leaned to the ant and the ferret.
Sight we have darkened with sense and power we have stifled with labour,
Likened in mood to the things we gaze at and are in our vestures:
Therefore we toil unhelped; we are left to our weakness and blindness.
Not in those veils now they rose to their skies, but like loose-fitting mantles
Dropped in the vestibules huge of their vigorous realms that besiege us,
All that reminded of earth; then clothed with raiment of swiftness
Straight they went quivering up in a glory like fire or the storm-blast.
Even those natural vestures of puissance they leave when they enter
Mind's more subtle fields and agree with its limitless regions
Peopled by creatures of bliss and forms more true than earth's shadows,—
Mind that pure from this density, throned in her splendours immortal
Looks up at Light and suffers bliss from ineffable kingdoms
Where beyond Mind and its rays is the gleam of a glory supernal:
There our sun cannot shine and our moon has no place for her lustres,
There our lightnings flash not, nor fire of these spaces is suffered.
They with bodies impalpable here to our touch and our seeing,
But for a higher delight, to a brighter sense, with more sweetness
Palpable there and visible, thrilled with a lordlier joyance,
Came to the courts of Zeus and his heavens sang to their footsteps.
Harmonies flowed through the blissful coils of the kingdoms of rapture.
Then by his mighty equals surrounded the Thunderer regnant
Veiled his thought in sound that was heard in their souls as they listened.
Veiled are the high Gods always lest there should dawn on the mortal
Light too great from the skies and men to their destiny clear-eyed
Walk unsustained like the gods; then Night and Dawn were defeated
And of their masks the deities robbed would be slaves to their subjects.
“Children of Immortality, gods who are joyous for ever,

ILION

Now too from earth and her children voices of anger and weeping
Beat at our thrones; 'tis the grief and the wrath of fate-stricken creatures,
Mortals struggling with destiny, hearts that are slaves to their sorrow.
We unmoved by the cry will fulfil our unvarying purpose.
Troy shall fall at last and the ancient ages shall perish.
You who are lovers of Ilion turn from the moans of her people,
Chase from your hearts their prayers, blow back from your nostrils the incense.
Let not one nation resist by its glory the good of the ages.
Twilight thickens over man and he moves to his winter of darkness.
Troy that displaced with her force and her arms¹ the luminous ancients,
Sinks in her turn by the ruder strength of the half-savage Achaians.
They to the Hellene shall yield and the Hellene fall by the Roman.
Rome too shall not endure, but by strengths ill-shaped shall be broken,
Nations formed in the ice and² mist, confused and crude-hearted.
So shall the darker and ruder always prevail o'er³ the brilliant
Till in its turn to a ruder and darker it falls and is shattered.
So shall mankind make speed to destroy what 'twas mighty creating.
Ever since knowledge failed and the ancient ecstasy slackened,
Light has been helper to death and darkness increases the victor.
So shall it last till the fallen ages return to their greatness.
For if the twilight be helped not, night o'er the world cannot darken;
Night forbidden how shall a greater dawn be effected?⁴
Gods of the light who know and resist that the doomed may have succour,
Always then shall desire and passion strive with Ananke?
Conquer the cry of your heart-strings that man too may conquer his sorrow
Stilled in his yearnings. Cease, O ye gods, from the joy of rebellion.
Open the eye of the soul, admit the voice of the Silence.
So in the courts of Heaven august the Thunderer puissant
Spoke to her sons in their souls and they heard him, mighty in silence.⁵
Then to her brother divine the white-armed passionless Hera;
"Zeus, we remember, thy sons forget, Apollo and Ares."
"Hera, queen of the heavens, they forget not, but choose to be mindless.

¹ "And her arms" is cancelled in the manuscript and the line is marked for revision, but no substitute has been put.

² After "and" a sign has been put to suggest a possible additional word.

³ "Prevail o'er" is cancelled but the line has been left without the substitute the poet wanted to introduce.

⁴ "Effected" is scratched out but nothing written instead to make up the last three syllables of the hexameter.

⁵ "Silence" is deleted, possibly because there is the same closing word two lines earlier, but the needed substitute is left unwritten.

MOTHER INDIA

This is the greatness of gods that they know and can put back the knowledge;
Doing the work they have chosen they turn not for fruit nor for failure.
Griefless they walk to their goal and strain not their eyes towards the ending.
Light that they have they can lose with a smile, not as souls in the darkness
Clutch at every beam and mistake their one ray for all splendour.¹
All things are by Time and the Will eternal that moves us.
And for each birth its hour is set in the night or the dawning²
There is an hour for knowledge, an hour to forget and to labour.”

Great Cronion ceased and high in the heavenly silence
Rose in their midst the voice of the loud impetuous Ares
Sounding far in the luminous fields of his soul as with thunder.
“Father, we know and we have not forgotten. This is our godhead,
Still to strive and never to yield to the evil that conquers.
I will not dwell with the Greeks nor aid them save forced by Ananke
And because lives of the great and the blood of the strong are my portion.
This too thou knowest, our nature enjoys in mankind its fulfilment.
War is my nature and greatness and hardness, the necks of the vanquished;
Force is my soul and strength is my bosom; I shout in the battle
Breaking cities like toys and the nations are playthings of Ares:
Hither and thither I shove them and throw down or range on my table.
Constancy most I love, nobility, virtue and courage;
Fugitive hearts I abhor and the nature fickle as sea-foam.
Now if the ancient spirit of Titan battle is over,—
Tros fights no more on the earth, nor now Heracles tramples and struggles
Bane of the hydra or slaying the Centaurs o’er Pelion driven,—
Now if the earth no more must be shaken by Titan horsehooves,
Since to a pettier framework all things are fitted consenting,
Yet will I dwell not in Greece nor favour the nurslings of Pallas.
I will await the sons of my loins and the teats of the she-wolf,
Consuls browed like the cliffs and plebeians stern of the wolf-brood,
Senates of kings and armies of granite that grow by disaster;
Such be the nation august that is fit for the favour of Ares!
They shall fulfil me and honour my mother, imperial Hera.
Then with an iron march they shall move to their world-wide dominion,
Through the long centuries rule and at last because earth is impatient,
Slowly with haughtiness perish compelled by mortality’s transience
Leaving a Roman memory stamped on the ages of weakness.”

¹ A sign against the space between this line and the next indicates that something was meant to be added.

² Ditto

Students' Section

MOTHER'S TALKS

(To The Children of the Ashram)

ON OCCULTISM

It has been often said and it is very true that as soon as you enter the domain of the invisible, the very first things you meet are literally frightful. If you have no fear, then alone you are safe; but the least fear means the utmost peril. It is for this reason that in ancient days the aspirant had to pass through a severe discipline for a long time precisely with the object of getting rid of fear and therefore of all possibility of danger before he was permitted to start on the way.

That is why till now I have not spoken to you of it. But if any of you feel you have a disposition for such things, or some special aptitude in this direction and are ready to surmount all weaknesses, well, I am at your disposal, ready to help you and initiate you into the mysteries. But I am afraid you have still to grow a little more, become more mature before I can take up the charge.

Of course, age is really no bar. I was doing occultism when I was 12 years old. But I must tell you I had no fear, I had fear of nothing. Here you come out of the body, you are connected with the body by the very tiniest, almost imperceptible, bit of thread, as it were. If the thread snaps, there is an end of it all, the end of your life. So you come out into another world and begin to look about and see what kind of world it is. Generally, the first things you see, as I said, are absolutely terrifying. In your normal view, the air about you is empty; there is nothing—you see the blue of the sky or the white cloud or the sunshine and every thing is beautiful. But when you have the other sight, the picture is quite different. You see that the whole atmosphere is filled with a multitude of small formations, which are the remains of desires and mental deformations and they crowd about you in such a way that the whole thing gives you a very disagreeable impression. Indeed, it is positively ugly more

often than not. They come near you, attack you, press upon you and you fear and tremble. Then they assume formidable proportions. But if you are not shaken, if you can look with the eye of a calm curiosity, you will find then there is nothing so very terrifying. Things are not beautiful perhaps, but they are not frightful either.

I shall tell you a story to illustrate my point. I knew a Dane who was a painter, a painter of some talent. He was interested in occultism. Some of you might have heard of him. He had come here and met Sri Aurobindo. He did a portrait too of Sri Aurobindo. It was during the first Great War. He returned to France and saw me. He asked me to teach him this science. I taught him how to come out of the body, how to maintain control etc. etc. I told him especially, what I tell you now, not to have fear. Now he came to me one day and narrated his experience of a night. He had a dream; but of course it was not a dream: he knew how to come out of the body and was out consciously. Once out he was trying to find where he was. Suddenly he saw moving towards him a tiger, huge and formidable, evidently with dire intentions. He remembered, however, my advice. So he kept calm and quiet and said to himself: "There is no danger, I am protected, nothing can happen to me, I am surrounded by the power of protection". And he looked straight at the animal calmly and fearlessly. As he continued looking, strange to say, he saw the tiger diminishing in size, shrinking and shrinking, till at last it became a small harmless cat!

What did the tiger represent? I told the painter that perhaps in the course of the day or at some time he was angry with some one and indulged in violent thoughts, wishing him harm etc. Now, as in the physical world, so too in the occult world there is a law of action and reaction or return movement. You cherish a bad thought; it returns upon you as an attack from outside. So the tiger might have represented some bad thought or impulse in him which came back upon him, like, as it is said, a boomerang. It is exactly one of the reasons why one should have control over one's thoughts and feelings and sensations. For if you think ill of a person, wish unpleasant things for him, then in your dream you are likely to see the person coming to attack you, more violently perhaps than you thought of doing. In your ignorance and impulse of self-justification you say, "Just see, was I not right in my feeling towards this man, he wanted to kill me!" In point of fact, however, the contrary is the truth. It is a common law in occultism that if you make a formation—a mental formation, for example, to the effect that an accident or some unpleasant thing should happen to a person and you send out the formation to do its work, then, if it so happens that the person concerned is on a higher level of consciousness, that is to say, if he wishes harm to none, is quite disinterested and indifferent in the matter,

then the formation approaches him but does not enter into his atmosphere or touch him, it rebounds upon the sender. In that case a serious accident may happen to the sender of the formation: if one wishes death to another, death may come to himself. That is often the result of *black magic* which is a deformation of occultism.

Formations are of many kinds. A formation is made for a particular work. When the work is done, the formation too dissolves. But it is a huge and complex subject. You cannot learn the whole of chemistry in one hour.

I shall tell you another story in this connection, for it has an occult bearing.

There was a very well-known scientist in Paris. He has written the story in a book of his. He wanted to know to what extent man's reason can affect or influence his reflex movements, how far one can control one's instinctive or subconscious impulses by the force of conscious intelligence. So one day he went to the Zoo. Among the animals there were huge snakes, one was particularly notorious for its vicious character, that is to say, it could be easily excited and put into anger. It was a very big animal, black but beautiful. The serpents were of course kept within glass cases, the glass being sufficiently thick to prevent any possibility of accident. He came before meal-time, when it was hungry; for after food they go to sleep. He stood before the glass-pane, quite near and began teasing and exciting the animal. I do not remember exactly what he did to rouse the animal, but there it was wild with anger; it shot out like a spring and darted at the face of the gentlemen who was just on the other side of the glass almost touching it. He knew very well that nothing could happen to him, the barrier was sound and secure and yet each time the snake darted at him, he leaped back to avoid the blow as it were. The thing repeated continually and however much he repeated to himself all the reasons of his safety and security, the reflex gesture could not be controlled .

Only the scientist did not know one thing—an element of occult knowledge escaped him. The physical movement of the serpent was accompanied by a considerable amount of a vital projection of its nervous energy. It was that which struck him with an irresistible force. It was almost like a violent physical shock and mere reason has no power to control it. To check and control, you must learn the occult way.

NOLINI KANTA GUPTA

KEATS'S "ON FIRST LOOKING INTO CHAPMAN'S "HOMER"*

(Some Critical Notes)

THIS sonnet, an early composition of Keats's, is one of his best and has ranked with the most celebrated sonnets in the English language, like (to mention a few) Shakespeare's "Poor soul. . .", Milton's *On His Blindness*, Blanco White's "Mysterious Night...", Wordsworth's "The world is too much with us...", Shelley's *Ozymandias*, though it is a descriptive rather than a reflective sonnet and as such is more comparable to the last-named than to the others except that *Ozymandias* contains, as usual with Shelley, a wide imagination-charged moral whereas this, as mostly with the early Keats, leaves us with only a keen symbol of lofty feeling.

As far as the sonnet-mode allows, it gives brief snatches, often intermixed, of nearly all the various manners and tempers compassed by Keats in his poetic career. There is the romantic mood of wonder and exultation, the *penchant* for Greek mythology and the Greek spirit in its movement towards the beautiful mingled with the sublime, the distant charm of Spenser, the Miltonic majesty, the Shakespearean swiftness and surprise, the excited energy of some of the Bard's contemporaries—and, fusing all of them, the typical Keatsian quiver of both sense and soul and intense imaginative response to Art as well as Nature.

It is a sonnet on the Italian model *à la* Petrarch. Its form is the simplest and most straightforward possible in that model: *abba abba, cd cd cd*. There is also the required sense-pause at the end of the octave, unlike as in the overflowing

* Much have I travelled in the realms of gold
And many goodly states and kingdoms seen,
Round many western islands have I been
Which bards in fealty to Apollo hold.
Oft of one wide expanse had I been told
That deep-browed Homer ruled as his demesne,
Yet did I never breathe its pure serene
Till I heard Chapman speak out loud and bold.

Then felt I like some watcher of the skies
When a new planet swims into his ken;
Or like stout Cortez, when with eagle eyes
He stared at the Pacific—and all his men
Looked at each other with a wild surmise—
Silent, upon a peak in Darien.

Milonicised Petrarch. But the continuity of theme is well-sustained and in a manner at once natural and striking. The image of travel and discovery, with which the sonnet begins, comes at the close also and finds its climax in a historical picture (though "Cortez" is a mistake for "Balboa"). In between there is a slight shift of vision—from voyaging and exploring to the adventure of astronomical observation. But it is woven into the fundamental pattern both by what precedes and follows it. For, as preparation of the "skies", we have the breathing of the "pure serene"—the atmospheric suggestion serving as the link. And as a sustaining of the sea-discovery idea we have in the astronomer-passage the word "swims". Similarly, in the sea-passage that comes after, there is "eagle eyes", the eagle-association immediately sending our mind to the sky. Again, the Cortez-incident is vivid with the use of sight—Cortez's own staring at the Pacific and the looking of his men at each other. This use of sight joins up with the astronomer's watching in the preceding simile, and the different thing seen—namely, skies—gets assimilated into the thing beheld here—namely, sea—and becomes part of the basic symbol. Another point of linkage is the peak in Darien, something that is—in Shelley's phrase elsewhere—"pinnacled high in the intense mane", a position in the sky. A less exacting view could be that the basic symbol is simply of searching and of witnessing wonders, with sea and sky as variants. But the view which we are holding goes deeper into the details of imaginative art.

Now for some other artistic *minutiae*. Line 1 is rich with liquids—l's and m's. The word "gold" is suggestive not only of precious brightness, the opulence of poetic imagination and the light of poetic revelation, but also of the rhythm and resonance of great poetry, its golden music. Line 2 is comparatively commonplace, but, over and above the significance continuing in it, its sound connects with that of the first by the prolongation of the m's and the taking up twice of the 'g' of "gold"; this helps the fitting of it into the uplifted and forceful expression of the rest of the piece. The next two lines are more visual and vivid and with the mention of "Apollo" and the "bards" we are made aware of what the "realms of gold" really are. Line 5 hits off very well the character of the Homeric spirit in poetry. "Wide expanse" is just what Homer's epic achievement in conception and music is and the epithet "deep-browed" for Homer suggests splendidly both the majesty and profundity of his tone and the grand brooding experience and vision that were his, particularly the experience and vision of suffering that furrows the foreheads of mortals. The phrase "pure serene" is also intensely evocative of the Homeric mood and Muse that in the midst of the greatest power or poignance is yet poised, ordered, harmonised. Appropriately does Keats speak of Homer *ruling* his kingdom—that is, showing a balanced mastery in his inspiration. Line 8, on the other hand, gives us

MOTHER INDIA

Chapman to perfection. Keats did not intend a contrast, rather he thought of equating Homer and Chapman; he did not realise that Homer's energy is unlike Chapman's vehemence and vigour, it is never "loud and bold". Chapman strikes strong chords out of the jolty four-line ballad-metre converted into a striding completed fourteener, but nowhere revives the surge and thunder of the multi-motioned yet sinuous and calmly controlled Greek hexameter. Yes, Keats hardly realised the difference, but some unconscious intuition brought into the three lines where he speaks of Homer something of the very accent of the Greek poet, while in the one line where he talks of Chapman we have precisely that Elizabethan's manner. The lines about the sky-watcher and the new planet have a combination of facility and felicity which has made them, either as a whole or in part, stock phrases almost, yet without any loss of their immediate uplifting grip. The next line is equally memorable in a different way—and the figure of Cortez in it agrees excellently with Chapman's loudness and boldness: the epithet "stout" (which, of course, does not mean "fat" here) and the noun-adjective "eagle" convey a sense of daring, keen, sturdy splendour. But the whole close which the mention of Cortez brings is far above anything Chapmanian. It is, in its own kind, a Darien-peak of poetry, wonderfully tense, the last line absolutely superb with its breathlessness, remoteness, magic and semi-spiritual strangeness. We are no longer in the world we know, the geographical reference gets transcended and transfigured, and a symbol rises before us—some eternal elevation of visionary vigil in the mind's solitude is conjured up, some hushed high point of in-drawn consciousness giving the glimpse of an uncharted infinity beyond of

Force one with unimaginable rest.

K. D. SETHNA

WITH THE CHILDREN

INTRODUCTION

OFTEN in class I have wanted to join hands with you and run down those lanes and byways of mental adventure. Often have I caught the sparkle in your eyes, with its light of challenge and anticipation, which says: "Oh bother the lesson! let us wander into these magic woods of wonder lit by the strange fires of curiosity—we could talk of so many things and places, people and personalities of which we yet know nothing".

Sometimes I have acquiesced, which means I have given in, or agreed to your persuasions, and we have digressed from the main course of the lesson, found ourselves wandering off at a tangent, on an entirely different subject. But, you say, these occasions have been all too rare; and you are a little puzzled to know why we cannot enjoy these digressions more often.

Well, I have thought over it and come to a decision. Although it is often impossible to indulge our curiosity in the various paths of general knowledge suggested by words, things and places found in our text books, and to explore the avenues of interest which seem so attractive during a lesson which has already been planned, I have made a mental note at the time and, later, I have written down answers to your queries in a more comprehensive way than was possible in the class at the time. In this way you may enjoy these small essays, because really it is you who have created them and therefore they are yours.

INDIA AND ENGLAND

As our subject is English and many of the text-books we use are mainly about life as lived in England or Europe, including such countries as France, Italy, Spain, Germany, Portugal, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Holland, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, Norway, Sweden, Iceland and Yugoslavia and the peoples who live in these countries, it is natural that the larger portion of your questions are on England or Europe, the people and their ways and customs. But also your questions often demand a comparison with your own ways of life—a comparison between India and Europe. You may well recall my correcting you in the class when you have referred to 'your country', meaning Bengal, Gujerat, Punjab etc. I have explained that these are pro-

vinces of India, like Madras province and should be referred to as such, and that you should only refer to India or Bharat as your country. This has been with a view to strengthen a national consciousness in you; so that you may not think so much that you are Bengalis or Gujeratis or Punjabis but of being first and foremost Indians—thereby creating the higher sense of national unity. It is natural, though, that you should make this error, India is such a big country that, excluding Russia, nearly the whole of the continent of Europe can be put inside it. It extends 2,000 miles east to west and 2,000 miles north to south with an area of some two million (2,000,000) square miles. The size of an ordinary district or province of India is 4,000 square miles, in which could be placed many of the European countries. So you see, because of the size of this great country of India it has been more difficult for the people of the east to come easily into contact with the people of the west, and likewise with those of the north and south, than in a country of a smaller size. I say, 'has been', because today it is not so difficult; owing to improved conditions of travel in roads, railways and air-routes man has more and better opportunities of meeting his brothers in far-off places and countries.

There was a time when England was divided into small kingdoms; then the Romans came and conquered it, but at the same time brought their culture, their administration and science. They built roads from north to south and from east to west, primarily to move their armies and establish their rule; but these roads also brought unity to the Britons enabling them to mix and understand one another more easily. We might say that there was a similar good thing the British did in India. In establishing railways they brought the peoples of this country into closer union with one another. And also a great bond of union in a different way has been the English language which enables many a Bengali to converse with a Gujerati or a Kannarese, a Tamilian or a Telegu etc., not to mention visitors and travellers from other countries, who nearly always have a knowledge of English, as this language is now taught in almost every school in the world.

Ah! I can see some of you thinking: "But the British did some things which were not so good". That is, no doubt, true, but one would rather you looked at the good they did than at the bad, for the *good* people do is *positive*, and the bad they do is *negative*.

It is the negative "past that seeks to endure" that we have to fight against in the great battle for the future, which the Mother speaks of in the students' prayer She has given us. If there is anything good in a nation or its people it is *that* which endures in the end, it is *that* which is of any eventual value to the evolution and progress of the human race as a whole. The leaning towards the spiritual life which we find only consistently strong in the Indian people

today has endured from Vedic times; it may have slept, but it has never died. It is such qualities of a race that are of real value, not their weaknesses or their failures. Think more often of the Positive Good—which is Divine, rather than of the Negative Bad which is Anti-divine or at its best (if one can use such an adjective for bad) human or animal. One of you asked the other day: “Will English become the world language in the future?” There was obviously some quite deep thinking behind this question. There was a time when I thought that it seemed to be a possibility on the basis that as countries have merged their dialects into a common tongue as soon as they become more and more unified, so might it be possible when nations become more unified that they may come to speak a language common to them all; but this can only be a guess, and when one thinks more about it it seems most improbable. I should rather say now that one language may enrich another but not obliterate it, especially those languages that are embedded in the heart of a nation. And even if the world did speak one language it would speak it differently in different parts of the globe with infinite variation born from the natures of the various peoples who spoke it. In any case the unity into which we are evolving is not this kind of unity; it does not rely solely on the outward things. The unity to which the Truth in man is aspiring is an inner unity first, which can express itself variously in manifestation. Of course some languages will die, especially those which are rigid and refuse to be enriched by others, or those that cannot keep pace with the progressive march of the times or the evolving impetus of human life and consciousness.

NORMAN DOWSETT

THY GRACE

(Translated from a Bengali song sung by a girl on Mother's birthday)

Thy Grace I pray for, O Mother,
 Within my heart,
Thy fadeless light
 Upon my life's pathway.
O Infinite! O Eternal!
Golden image of Love!
With Thy moonglow
Make my night blameless.
I pray for Thy Grace, O Mother,
 Within my heart!

A new music lights festive lamps
 Upon the stainless sky,
The cry of Thy flute
 Weaves it into the dust of our earth.
Creation's brush
 Draws its heavenly calligraph
 In deathless dawns.
Awake, awake, my Dream-Queen!
O Mother, I pray for Thy Grace
 Within my heart!

ROBI GUPTA

(Translated by NOLINI KANTA GUPTA)

February 21, 1954

THE DAWN APPEARS

The lamps are lit in the winding lanes of night;
A silver flutter of wings fleets through the skies,
The stars come flying from some nameless height
 Across the blue surprise.

I come along the vales of dusky dreams
Where flowers wave their heads in the balmy breeze;
I walk alone by dancing mountain-streams
 That meander through drowsy trees.

I walk and the stars fly sleepless by my side
Like winged vigils; through the viewless night
The darkling phantoms blindfold flee, and hide
 Their gloomy presence from light.

Slowly the stars drop one by one and I see
Vanishing behind the woods the nightly fears;
A tranquil hush pervades the infinity
 And the golden dawn appears.

RANAJIT

REVERIES

The night is mute: a trance sublime
With myriad wings of mystic gold
Embraces earth in a blazing clasp;
The sea murmurs a tale untold

Of days that dawned in diamond-glow,
Of days that brought the earth to a height
Of marvels packed with sunny truth
That ringed the mortals' reveries bright.

A cry for light in endless voice
Is heard along the breeze-blown shore:
A thirst that man can never quench,
A bliss that even Gods adore!

The stars are sprouting in the blue,
The darkness glimmers gay and sweet—
A splendid rapture soaring soft,
The One Supreme for ever to greet!

PRITHWINDRA

THY MANIFESTATION

Now nearer to me Thou art
But still beyond my reach—
I run to every place with a broken heart
Like a boatless man on a beach!

I have traced in matter Thy Light,
Dug deep and found but Thee:
Ignorance stops my seeing Thee at first sight
And the Inconscient's darkness covers me.

But I have caught Thy Glorious Sign
And followed to Thy Light's hold:
Suddenly the Veil's grey twine
Breaks to blaze forth Thy Gold!

RAMRAJ