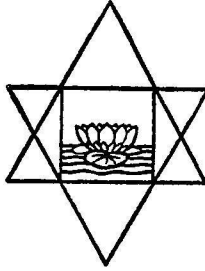


# MOTHER INDIA

JULY, 1954

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

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

SRI AUROBINDO

\* \* \*

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

*Sri Aurobindo*

TRANSLATED FROM THE MOTHER'S  
"Prayers and Meditations."

# MOTHER INDIA

## MONTHLY REVIEW OF CULTURE

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*"Great is Truth and it shall prevail"*

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### CONTENTS

	<i>Page</i>
ILION—BOOK I: THE BOOK OF THE HERALD ... <i>Sri Aurobindo</i>	... 1
CORRESPONDENCE WITH SRI AUROBINDO TRANSFORMATION: PSYCHIC-SPIRITUAL- SUPRAMENTAL ... <i>Nirodbaran</i>	... 10
THE TRANSFORMATION OF THE PHYSICAL CONSCIOUSNESS AND NATURE (Letters to a Disciple) ... <i>Sri Aurobindo</i>	... 13
SRI AUROBINDO AND AESTHETICS ... <i>V. K. Gokak</i>	... 15
THE ASSAULT OF GOLDEN PEACE (Poem) ... <i>Romen</i>	... 19
MATTER AND LIFE A SCRUTINY OF SCIENTIFIC OPINIONS ... <i>K D. Sethna</i>	... 20
SRI AUROBINDO: HIS PHILOSOPHY AND YOGA ... <i>A. B. Purani</i>	... 24
SRI AUROBINDO AND THE UPANISHADS ... <i>Madhav Pandit</i>	... 28
THE INTEGRAL YOGA OF SRI AUROBINDO CHAPTER XVII: THE INTEGRAL LIBERATION—PART II ... <i>Rishabhchand</i>	... 37
LET THY SMILE... (Poem) ... <i>Robi Gupta</i>	... 41
SRI AUROBINDO'S INTERPRETATION OF THE GITA ... <i>C. C. Dutt</i>	... 42
WORK AND SADHAKS ...	... 48
TO THE EMPLOYEES OF SRI AUROBINDO ASHRAM	... 49

### Students' Section

MOTHER'S TALKS ... <i>Nolini Kanta Gupta</i>	. 51
MY BOYHOOD UNDER SRI AUROBINDO ...	
(1) THE VITAL AND ITS NATURE	
(2) THE PHYSICAL : ITS QUALITIES AND STATES ... <i>Nagin Doshi</i>	... 54
SOUL (Poem) ... <i>Prithwindra</i>	... 61
WITH THE STUDENTS ... <i>Norman Dowsett</i>	... 62
THE SUPREME BEING (Poem) ... <i>Ramraj</i>	... 64

# ILION

## BOOK I: THE BOOK OF THE HERALD

*(The opening parts of this Book were recast and included in his "Collected Poems and Plays" by Sri Aurobindo to illustrate to some extent his theory of the true English quantitative hexameter. We are publishing the rest of it from his unrevised manuscript. The opening parts ended with the coming of the great ones of Troy from their chambers at the summons of Deiphobus who had met Talthybius, the envoy of Achilles, in the early dawn. Six lines from the already published verses are repeated below for the sake of continuity.)*

LAST from her chamber of sleep where she lay in the Ilian mansions  
Far in the heart of the house with the deep-bosomed daughters of Priam,  
Noble and tall and erect in a nimbus of youth and of glory,  
Claiming the world and life as a fief of her strength and her courage,  
Dawned through a doorway that opened to distant murmurs and laughter,  
Capturing the eye like a smile or a sunbeam, Penthesilea.

She from the threshold cried to the herald, crossing the marble,  
Regal and fleet, with her voice that was mighty and dire in its sweetness.  
"What with such speed has impelled from the wind-haunted beaches of Troas,  
Herald, thy car while<sup>1</sup> the sun yet hesitates under the mountains?  
Comest thou humbler to Troy, Talthybius, now than thou camest  
Once when the streams of my East sang low to my ear, not this Ocean  
Loud, and I roamed in my mountains uncalled by the voice of Apollo?  
Bringest thou dulcet-eyed peace or, sweeter to Penthesilea,  
Challenge of war when the spears fall thick on the shields of the fighters,  
Lightly the wheels leap onward chanting the anthem of Ares,  
Death is at work in his fields and the heart is enamoured of danger?  
What says Odysseus, the baffled Ithacan? what Agamemnon?  
Are they then weary of war who were rapid and bold and triumphant,  
Now that their gods are reluctant, now victory darts not from heaven  
Down from the clouds above Ida directing the luminous legions  
Armed by Fate, now Pallas forgets, now Poseidon slumbers?  
Bronze were their throats to the battle like bugles blaring in chorus;  
Mercy they knew not, but shouted and ravened and ran to the slaughter

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

MOTHER INDIA

Eager as hounds when they chase, till a woman met them and stayed them,  
Loud my war-shout rang by Scamander. Herald of Argos,  
What say the vaunters of Greece to the virgin Penthesilea?"

High was the Argive's answer confronting the mighty in Troya.  
"Princes of Pergama, whelps of the lion who roar for the mellay,  
Suffer my speech! It shall ring like a spear on the hearts of the mighty.  
Blame not the herald; his voice is an impulse, an echo, a channel  
Now for the timbrels of peace and now for the drums of the battle.  
And I have come from no cautious strength, from no half-hearted speaker,  
But from the Pthian. All know him! Proud is his soul as his fortunes,  
Swift as his sword and his spear are the speech and the wrath from his bosom.  
I am his envoy, herald am I of the conquering Argives.  
Has not one heard in the night when the breezes whisper and shudder,  
Dire, the voice of a lion unsatisfied, gnawed by his hunger,  
Seeking his prey from the gods? For he prowls through the glens of the  
mountains,

Errs a dangerous gleam in the woodlands, fatal and silent.  
So for a while he endures, for a while he seeks and he suffers  
Patient yet in his terrible grace as assured of his banquet;  
But he has lacked too long and he lifts his head and to heaven  
Roars in his wonder incensed, impatiently. Startled the valleys  
Shrink from the dreadful alarum, the cattle gallop to shelter.  
Arming the herdsmen cry to each other for comfort and courage."

So Talthybius spoke, as a harper voicing his prelude  
Touches his strings to a varied music, seeks for a concord;  
Long his strain he prepares. But one broke in on the speaker,—  
Sweet was his voice like a harp's though heard in the front of the onset,—  
One of the sons of Fate by the people loved whom he ruined,  
Leader in counsel and battle, the Priamid, he in his beauty  
Carelessly walking who scattered the seeds of Titanic disaster.  
"Surely thou dreamedst at night and awaking thy dreams have not left thee!  
Hast thou not woven thy words to intimidate children in Argos  
Sitting alarmed in the shadows who listen pale to their nurses?  
Greek, thou art standing in Ilion now and thou speak'st to<sup>1</sup> princes.  
Use not thy words but thy king's. If friendship their honey-breathed burden,  
Friendship we clasp from Achilles, but challenge outpace with our challenge  
Meeting the foe ere he moves in his will to the clash of encounter.  
Such is the way of the Trojans since Phryx by the Hellespont halting

<sup>1</sup> Alternative to "speak'st to": "facest her".

## ILION

Seated Troy on her hill with the Ocean for comrade and sister.”

Shaking in wrath his filleted head Talthybius answered:

“Princes, ye speak their words who drive you! Thus said Achilles:  
Rise,<sup>1</sup> Talthybius, meet in her spaces the car of the morning;  
Challenge her coursers divine as they bound through the plains of the Troad.  
Hasten, let not the day wear gold ere thou stand in her ramparts  
Herald charged with my will to a haughty and obstinate nation,  
Speak in the palace of Priam the word of the Pthian Achilles.  
Freely and not as his vassal who leads, Agamemnon, the Argive,  
But as a ruler in Hellas I send thee, king of my nations.  
Long I lingered<sup>2</sup> apart from the mellay of gods in the Troad,  
Long has my listless spear leaned back on the peace of my tent-side,  
Deaf to the talk of the trumpets, the whine of the chariots speeding;  
Sole with my heart I have lived, unheeding the Hellene murmur,  
I hid when it roared for the hunt the lion-pack of the wargod,  
Day after day I walked at dawn and in blush of the sunset,  
Far by the call of the seas and alone with the gods and my dreaming,  
Leaned to the unsatisfied chant of my heart and the rhythms of Ocean,  
Sung to by hopes that were sweet-lipped and vain. Polyxena’s brothers  
Still are the brood of the Titan Laomedon slain in his greatness,  
Engines of God unable to bear all the might that they harbour.  
Awe they have chid from their hearts, nor our common humanity binds them,  
Stay have they none in the gods who approve, giving calmness to mortals:  
But like the Titans of old they have hugged to them grandeur and ruin.  
Seek then the race self-doomed and the leaders blinded by heaven—  
Not in the agora swept by the winds of debate and the shoutings  
Lion-voiced, huge of the people! In Troya’s high-crested mansion  
Speak out my word to the hero Deiphobus, head of the mellay,  
Paris the racer of doom and the stubborn strength of Aeneas.  
Herald of Greece, when thy feet shall stand<sup>3</sup> on the gold and the marble,  
Rise in the Ilian megaron, curb not the cry of the challenge.  
Thus shalt thou say to them stroking the ground with the staff of defiance,  
Fronting the tempests of war, the insensate, the gamblers with ruin.<sup>4</sup>  
‘Princes of Troy, I have sat in your halls, I have slept in your chambers;  
Not in the battle alone, as a warrior glad of his foemen,  
Glad of<sup>5</sup> the strength that mates with his own, in peace we encountered.  
Marvelling I sat in the halls of my enemies, close to the bosoms

<sup>1</sup> Alternative: “Haste”.

<sup>2</sup> Alternative to “I lingered”: “I have walked”.

<sup>3</sup> Alternative: “be pressed”.

<sup>4</sup> Alternative: “downfall.”

<sup>5</sup> Alternative to “glad of”: “Loving”.

## MOTHER INDIA

Scarred by the dints of my sword and the eyes I had seen through the battle,  
Ate rejoicing the food of the East at the tables of Priam,  
Served by the delicatèst hands in the world, by Hecuba's daughter,  
Or with our souls reconciled in some careless and rapturous midnight  
Drank of the sweetness of Phrygian wine, admired<sup>1</sup> your bodies  
Shaped by the gods indeed and my spirit revolted from hatred;  
Softening it yearned in its strings to the beauty and joy of its foemen,  
Yearned from the death that o'ertakes and the flame that cries and desires  
Even at the end to save and even on the verge to deliver  
Troy and her wonderful works and her sons and her deep-bosomed daughters.  
Warned by the gods who reveal to the heart what the mind cannot hearken  
Deaf with its thoughts, I offered you friendship, I offered you bridal,  
Hellas for comrade, Achilles for brother, the world for enjoyment  
Won by my spear. And one heard my call and one turned to my seeking.  
Why is it then that the war-cry sinks not to rest by the Xanthus?  
We are not voices from Argolis, Lacedaemonian tricksters,  
Splendid and subtle and false; we are speakers of truth, we are Hellenes,  
Men of the northland faithful in friendship and noble in anger,  
Strong like our fathers of old. But you answered my truth with evasion  
Hoping to seize what I will not yield and you flattered your people.  
Long have I waited for wisdom to dawn on your violent natures.  
Lonely I paced o'er the sands by the thousand-throated waters  
Praying to Pallas the wise that the doom might turn<sup>2</sup> from your mansions,  
Buildings delightful, gracious as rhythms, lyrics in marble,  
Works of the transient gods;—and I yearned for the end of the war-din  
Hoping that Death might relent to the beautiful sons of the Trojans.  
Far from the cry of the spears, from the speed and the laughter of axles,  
Heavy upon me like iron the intolerable yoke of inaction  
Weighed like a load on a runner. The war-cry rose by Scamander;  
Xanthus was crossed on a bridge of the fallen, not by Achilles.  
Often I stretched out my hand to the spear, for the Trojan beaches  
Rang with the voice of Deiphobus shouting and slaying the Argives;  
Often my heart like an anxious mother for Greece and her children  
Leaped, for the air was full of the leonine roar of Aeneas.  
Always the evening fell or the gods protected the Argives.  
Then by the moat of the ships, on the hither plain of the Xanthus  
New was the voice that climbed through the din and sailed on the breezes,  
High, insistent, clear, and it shouted an unknown war-cry

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

<sup>2</sup> Alternative to "that the doom might turn": "for the doom to swerve".

## ILION

Threatening doom to the peoples. A woman had come in to aid you  
Regal and insolent, fair as the morning and fell as the northwind,  
Freed from the distaff who grasps at the sword and spurns at subjection  
Breaking the rule of the gods. She is turbulent, swift in the battle.  
Clanging her voice of the swan as a summons to death and disaster,  
Fleet-footed, happy and pitiless, laughing she runs to the slaughter;  
Strong with the gait that allures she leaps from her car to the slaying,  
Dabbles in blood smooth hands like lilies. Europe astonished  
Reels from her shock to the Ocean. She is the panic and mellay,  
War is her paean, the chariots thunder of Penthesilea.  
Doom was her coming, it seems, to the men of the West and their legions;  
Ajax sleeps for ever, Meriones lies on the beaches,  
One by one they are falling before you, the great in Achaia.  
Ever the wounded are borne like the stream of the ants when they forage,  
Past my ships, and they hush their moans as they near and in silence  
Gaze at the legions inactive accusing the fame of Achilles.  
Still have I borne with you, waited a little, looked for a summons,  
Longing for bridal torches, not flame on the Ilian housetops,  
Blood in the chambers of sweetness, the golden amorous city  
Swallowed by doom. Not broken I turned from the wrestle Titanic,  
Hopeless, weary of toil in the ebb of my glorious spirit,  
But from my stress of compassion for doom of the kindred nations,  
But for her sake whom my soul desires, for the daughter of Priam.  
And for Polyxena's sake I will speak to you yet as your lover  
Once ere the Fury, abrupt from Erebus, deaf to your crying,  
Mad with the joy of the massacre, seizes on wealth and on women  
Calling to Fire as it strides and Ilion sinks into ashes.  
Yield; for your doom is impatient. No longer your helpers hasten,  
Legions swift to your call; the yoke of your pride and your splendour  
Lies not now on the nations of earth as when Fortune desired you,  
Strength was your slave and Troya the lioness hungrily roaring  
Threatened the western world from her ramparts built by Apollo.  
Gladly released from the thraldom they hated, the insolent shackles  
Curbing their manhood the peoples arise and they pray for your ruin;  
Piled are their altars with gifts; their blessings help the Achaians.  
Memnon came, but he sleeps, and the faces swart of his nation  
Darken no more like a cloud over thunder and surge of the onset.  
Wearily Lycia fights; far fled are the Carian levies.  
Thrace retreats to her plains preferring the whistle of stormwinds  
Or on the banks of the Strymon to wheel in her Orphean measure,



## MOTHER INDIA

Not in the revel of swords and fronting the spears of the Hellenes.  
Princes of Pergama, open your gates to our Peace who would enter  
Life in her gracious clasp and forgetfulness, grave of earth's passions,  
Healer of wounds and the past In a comity equal, Hellenic,  
Asia join with Greece, our world from the frozen rivers  
Trod by the hooves of the Scythian to farthest undulant Ganges.  
Tyndarid Helen yield,<sup>1</sup> the desirable cause of your danger,  
Back to Greece that is empty long of her smile and her movements.  
Broider with<sup>2</sup> riches her coming, pomp of her slaves and the waggons  
Endlessly groaning with gold that arrive with the ransom of nations.  
So shall the Fury be pacified, she who exultant from Sparta  
Breathed in the sails of the Trojan ravisher helping his oarsmen.  
So shall the gods be appeased and the thoughts of their wrath shall be cancelled,  
Justice contented trace back her steps and for brands of the burning  
Torches delightful shall break into Troy with<sup>3</sup> the swords of the bridal.  
I like a bridegroom will seize on your city and clasp and defend her  
Safe from the envy of Argos, from Lacedaemonian hatred,  
Safe from the hunger of Crete and the Locrian's violent rapine.  
But if you turn from my voice and you hearken only to Ares  
Crying for battle within you deluded by Hera and Pallas,  
Swiftly fierce death's surges shall close over Troy and her ramparts  
Built by the gods shall be stubble and earth to the tread of the Hellene.  
For to my tents I return not, I swear it by Zeus and Apollo,  
Master of Truth who sits within Delphi fathomless brooding  
Sole in the caverns of Nature and hearkens her underground murmur,  
Giving my oath to his keeping mute and stern who forgets not.  
Not from the panting of Ares' toil to repose, from the wrestle  
Locked of hope and death in the ruthless clasp of the mellay  
Leaving again the Trojan ramparts unmounted, leaving  
Greece unavenged, the Aegean a lake and Europe a province.  
Choosing from Hellas exile, from Peleus and Deidamia,  
Choosing the field for my chamber of sleep and the battle for hearthside  
I shall go warring on till Asia enslaved to my footsteps  
Feels the tread of the God in my sandal pressed on her bosom.  
Rest shall I then when the borders of Greece are fringed with the Ganges;  
Thus shall the past pay its Titan ransom<sup>4</sup> and, Fate her balance  
Changing, a continent ravished suffer the fortune of Helen.

<sup>1</sup>Alternative "resign".   <sup>2</sup>Alternatives: "Frame in", "Chase in", "Equal with",  
"Double with".   <sup>3</sup>Alternative: "and".

<sup>4</sup> Alternative to "the past pay its Titan ransom": "the Titan ransom be paid."

## ILION

"This I have sworn allying my will to Zeus and Ananke."

So was it spoken, the Pthian challenge. Silent the heroes  
Looked back amazed on their past and into the night of their future.  
Silent their hearts felt a grasp from gods and had hints of the heavens.  
Hush was awhile in the room as if Fate were trying her balance  
Poised on the thoughts of her mortals. At length with a magical laughter  
Sweet as the jangling of bells upon anklets leaping in measure  
Answered high<sup>1</sup> to the gods the virgin Penthesilea.

"Long I had heard in my distant realms of the fame of Achilles,  
Ignorant still while I played with the ball and ran in the dances  
Thinking not ever to war; but I dreamed of the shock of the hero.  
So might a poet inland who imagines the rumour of Ocean  
Yearn with his lust for its<sup>2</sup> giant upheaval, its<sup>3</sup> dance as of hill-tops,  
Toss of the yellow mane and the tawny march and the voices  
Lionlike claiming earth as a prey for the clamorous waters.  
So have I longed as I came for the cry and the speed of Achilles.  
But he has lurked in his ships, he has sulked like a boy that is angry.  
Glad am I now of his soul that arises hungry for battle,  
Glad, whether victor I live or defeated travel to the shadows.  
Once shall my spear have rung on the shield of the Pthian Achilles.  
Peace I desire not. I came to a haughty and resolute nation,  
Honour and fame they cherish, not life by the gift of a foeman.  
Sons of the ancient house on whom Ilion looks as on Titans,  
Chiefs whom the world admires, do you fear then the shock of the Pthian?  
Gods, it is said, have decided your doom. Are you less in your greatness?  
Are you not gods to reverse their decrees or unshaken to suffer?  
Memnon is dead and the Carians leave you? Lycia lingers?  
But from the streams of my East I have come to you, Penthesilea."

"Virgin of Asia," answered Talthybius, "doom of a nation  
Brought thee to Troy and her haters Olympian shielded thy coming,  
Vainly who feedest men's hearts with a hope that the gods have rejected.  
Doom in thy sweet voice utters her counsels robed like a woman."

Answered the virgin disdainfully, wroth at the words of the Argive;  
"Hast thou not ended the errand they gave thee, envoy of Hellas?  
Not, do I think, as our counsellor camst thou elected from Argos,  
Nor as a lover to Troy hast thou hastened with amorous footing  
Hurting thy heart with her frowardness. Hatred and rapine sent thee,  
Greed of the Ilian gold and lust of the Phrygian women.

<sup>1</sup> Alternative "aloud"

<sup>2</sup> Alternative: "the".

<sup>3</sup> Alternative: "the".

## MOTHER INDIA

Voice of Achaian aggression! Doom am I truly; let Gnosus  
Witness it, Salamis speak of my fatal arrival and Argos  
Silent remember her wounds." But the Argive answered the virgin;  
"Hearken then to the words of the Hellene, Penthesilea.  
'Virgin to whom earth's strongest are corn in the sweep of thy sickle,  
Lioness vain of thy bruit thou besiegest the paths of the battle!  
Art thou not satiate yet? hast thou drunk then so little of slaughter?  
Death has ascended thy car; he has chosen thy hand for his harvest.  
But I have heard of thy pride and disdain, how thou scornest the Argives  
And of thy fate thou complainest that ever averse to thy wishes  
Cloisters the Pthian and matches with weaklings Penthesilea.  
'Not of the Ithacan boar nor the wild-cat littered in Locris  
Nor of the sleek-coat Argive wild-bulls sates me the hunting;'  
So hast thou said, 'I would bury my spear in the lion of Hellas.'  
Blind and infatuate, art thou not beautiful, bright as the lightning?  
Were not thy limbs made cunningly by linking sweetness to sweetness?  
Is not thy laughter an arrow surprising hearts imprudent?  
Charm is the seal of the gods upon woman. Distaff and girdle,  
Work of the jar at the well and the hush of our innermost chambers;  
These were appointed thee, but thou hast scorned them, O Titaness grasping  
Rather the shield and the spear. Thou, obeying thy turbulent nature,  
Trampl'st o'er laws that are old to the pleasure thy heart has demanded.  
Rather bow to the ancient Gods who are seated and constant.  
But for thyself thou passest and what hast thou gained for the aeons  
Mingled with men in their works and depriving the age of thy beauty?  
Fair art thou, woman, but fair with a bitter and opposite sweetness  
Clanging in war and when thou matchest thy voice with the shout of assemblies.  
Not to this end was thy sweetness made and the joy of thy members,  
Not to this rhythm Heaven tuned its pipe in thy throat of enchantment  
Armoured like men to go warring forth and with hardness and fierceness  
Mix in the strife and the hate while the varied meaning of Nature  
Perishes hurt in its heart and life is emptied of music.  
Long have I marked in your world a madness. Monarchs descending  
Court the imperious mob of their slaves and their suppliant gesture  
Shameless and venal offends the majestic tradition of ages:  
Princes plead in the agora; spurred by the tongue of a coward,  
Heroes march to an impious war at a priestly bidding.  
Gold is sought by the great with the chaffering heart of the trader.  
Asia fails and the Gods are abandoning Ida for Hellas.  
Why must thou come here to perish, O noble and exquisite virgin,

## ILION

Here in a cause not thine, in a quarrel remote from thy beauty,  
Leaving a land that is lovely and far to be slain among strangers?  
Girl, to thy rivers go back and thy hills where the grapes are aspirant.  
Trust not a fate that indulges; for all things, Penthesilea,  
Break with excess and he is the wisest who walks by a measure.  
Yet, if thou wilt, thou shalt meet me today in the shock of the battle;  
There will I give thee the fame thou desirest; captive in Hellas,  
Men shall point to thee always, smiling and whispering, saying,  
‘This is the woman who fought with the Greeks, overthrowing their heroes;  
This is the slayer of Ajax, this is the slave of Achilles.’”

Then with her musical laughter the fearless Penthesilea:  
“Well do I hope that Achilles enslaved shall taste of that glory  
Or on the Phrygian fields lie slain by the spear of a woman.”  
But to the herald Achaian the Priamid, leader of Troya:  
“Rest in the halls of thy foes and ease thy fatigue and thy winters.  
Herald, abide till the people have heard and reply to Achilles.  
Not as the kings of the West are Ilion’s princes and archons,  
Monarchs of men who drive their nations dumb to the battle.  
Not in the palace of Priam and not in the halls of the mighty  
Whispered councils prevail and the few dispose of the millions;  
But with their nation consulting, feeling the hearts of the commons  
Ilion’s princes march to the war or give peace to their foemen.  
Lightning departs from her kings and the thunder returns from her people  
Met in the ancient assembly where Ilius founded his columns  
And since her famous centuries, names that the ages remember  
Leading her, Troya proclaims her decrees to obedient nations.”

Ceasing he cried to the thralls of his house and they tended the Argive.  
Brought to a chamber of rest in the luminous peace of the mansion,  
Grey he sat and endured the food and the wine of his foemen,—  
Chiding his spirit that murmured within him and gazed undelighted,  
Vexed with the endless pomps of Laomedon. Far from those glories  
Memory winged it back to a sward half-forgotten, a village  
Nestling in leaves and low hills watching it crowned with the sunset.  
So for his hour he abode in earth’s palace of lordliest beauty,  
But in its caverns his heart was weary and, hurt by the splendours,  
Longed for Greece and the smoke-darkened roof of a cottage in Argos,  
Eyes of a woman faded and children crowding the hearthside.  
Joyless he rose and westward expected the sunrise on Ida.

SRI AUROBINDO

## CORRESPONDENCE WITH SRI AUROBINDO

### TRANSFORMATION PSYCHIC—SPIRITUAL—SUPRAMENTAL

MYSELF: The other day we had an interesting discussion with some persons. Please give your opinion on the matter.

They contended that our aspiring for the Supermind was not something sober—that we should aspire for the Divine realisation only. I told them that it was you who wanted the Supermind for the earth, not we.

I don't see what is wrong in my aspiring for the Supermind in spite of knowing all my weaknesses. The Divine Grace is there on which we rely at every moment, and if the central sincerity is there, there is nothing wrong, I think, in entertaining such an aspiration.

SRI AUROBINDO: By Divine realisation is meant the spiritual realisation—the realisation of Self, Bhagwan or Brahman on the mental-spiritual or else the over-mental plane. That is a thing (at any rate the mental-spiritual) which thousands have done. So it is obviously easier to do than the supramental. Also nobody can have the supramental realisation who has not had the spiritual. So far your opponent is right.

It is true that neither can be got in an effective way unless the whole being is turned towards it—unless there is a real and very serious spirit and dynamic reality of sadhana. So far you are right and the opponent also is right.

It is true that I want the supramental not for myself but for the earth and souls born on the earth, and certainly therefore I cannot object if anybody wants the supramental. But there are the conditions. He must want the Divine Will first and the soul's surrender and the spiritual realisation (through works, bhakti, knowledge, self-perfection) on the way. So there everybody is right.

The central sincerity is the first thing and sufficient for an aspiration to be entertained—a total sincerity is needed for the aspiration to be fulfilled. Amen!

MYSELF: What do you exactly mean by the measure of the soul's sincerity?

SRI AUROBINDO: I mean by the measure of the soul's sincerity a yearning after the Divine and its aspiration towards the higher life.

17-4-1935

MYSELF: I find, Sir, that you have most skillfully steered clear between two troubled seas of argument. Allow me to bring the discussion back to the point from where it started.

I have seen K's letter. By transformation, I find, you mean wholly living in the Divine. Then where is the difference between the Divine realisation as you define it, and the transformation you are yourself seeking for us? Did not persons like Ramkrishna, for example, who had this realisation, merge their consciousness entirely in the Divine, and thus had this kind of transformation? I think there is a difference, because you speak of a *complete* transformation—of mind, life and even the body. Obviously then, those whose realisation of the Divine is on the mental-spiritual plane cannot have the physical consummation.

SRI AUROBINDO: There are different statuses (*avastha*) of the Divine Consciousness. There are also different statuses of transformation. First is the psychic transformation, in which all is in contact with the Divine through the individual psychic consciousness. Next is the spiritual transformation in which all is merged in the Divine in the cosmic consciousness. Third is the supramental transformation in which all becomes supramentalised in the divine gnostic consciousness. It is only with the last that there can begin the *complete* transformation of mind, life and body—in my sense of completeness.

You are mistaken in two respects. First, the endeavour towards this achievement is not new and some Yogis have achieved it, I believe—but not in the way I want it. They achieved it as a personal siddhi maintained by Yoga-siddhi—not a dharma of the nature [physical transformation]. Secondly, the supramental transformation is not the same as the spiritual-mental. It is a change of mind, life and body which the mental or overmental-spiritual cannot achieve. All whom you mention were spirituals, but in different ways. Krishna's mind, for instance, was overmentalised, Ramkrishna's intuitive, Chaitanya's spiritual-psychic, Buddha's illumined higher mental. I don't know about B.G.—he seems to have been brilliant but rather chaotic. All that is different from the supramental. Then take the vital of the Paramhansas. It is said their vital behaves either like a child (Ramkrishna) or like a madman or like a demon or like something inert (cf. *Jadabharata*). Well, there is nothing supramental in all that.

One can be a fit instrument of the Divine in any of the transformations. The question is an instrument for what?

MYSELF: My main contention was that we *can* aspire for the Supermind since you had so emphatically stated that its realisation and the subsequent

## MOTHER INDIA

transformation of our entire existence was the ideal you stood for. Hence anyone ridiculing such aspirants was arguing against our ideal. Of course, I admit that the necessary conditions must be fulfilled.

SRI AUROBINDO: X ridicules them because they are not yet fit for the spiritual realisation, some not even for the psychic and yet say they are aspirants for the supermind. He says let us sincerely try for and achieve the spiritual and not talk big about the greater things still much beyond us. A rational attitude.

MYSELF: I feel that your reply is too conciliatory; otherwise, I don't see why the Supramental realisation should be looked upon as a secondary thing or a by-product, especially as you also say that the divinisation of the body cannot be done without it.

SRI AUROBINDO: Not secondary or by-product at all, but ultimate.

(Against the last part of my sentence he wrote: "Not in the sense I want.")

NIRODBARAN

## THE TRANSFORMATION OF THE PHYSICAL CONSCIOUSNESS AND NATURE

(Letters to a Disciple)

IN dealing with the physical and subconscious the working is always slower than when [it] acts on the mind and vital because the resistance of physical stuff is always heavier and less intelligent and adaptable; but as a compensation the work done in the being by this slower movement is in the end more complete, solid and durable.

14-12-1936

\* \* \*

It is indeed difficult for human nature to pass from its ordinary movement to the right (psychic and spiritual) poise and action, but it is necessary if the sadhana is to be done. If you had not the capacity, I would not ask you to do it but wait, as we wait for many others, till they are ready to make the endeavour. But you have the capacity and have shown it in all the parts of your inner being—it is now only to extend that thoroughly to the external nature and action that is necessary. The physical nature has offered a strong obstruction, but by steady will and keeping the true poise always in mind that can be overcome.

18-5-1937

\* \* \*

In the struggle with the physical consciousness such fits of weakness sometimes happen—one must learn to call in the higher force so that the strength may be replenished. The headache when the thought begins to go outward is also a thing that happens to some at this stage. The mind must remain empty and silent, for that is the condition of the peace and liberation that want to come.

8-6-1937

\* \* \*



## MOTHER INDIA

The experience described in your letter is a glimpse of the realisation of the true Self which is independent of the body. When this settles itself there is the liberation (*mukti*). Not only the body, but the vital and mind are felt to be only instruments and one's self is felt to be calm self-existent and free and wide or infinite. It is then possible for the psychic being to effect in that freedom the full transformation of the nature. All your former experiences were preparing for this, but the physical consciousness came across. Now that you have had the glimpse of the self separate from the body, this physical difficulty may soon be overcome.

30-5-1937

\* \* \*

What you see above is of course the true or higher consciousness—the Mother's—in which one sees all the world as one, a vast free consciousness full of freedom, peace and light—it is that that we speak of as the higher or divine consciousness. Even if it comes and goes, yet its effect on the heart shows that a connection has been established through the psychic—for the psychic is behind the heart. It is there above the head that the consciousness has to ascend and remain; while it also descends into the head and heart and lower vital and physical and brings there its wideness, light, peace and freedom.

19-6-1937

\* \* \*

It is the Force that Mother is pouring into you that makes the change, replacing the ordinary body consciousness by the true physical consciousness.

Experiences are necessary to prepare the consciousness—by repeated and many experiences the consciousness changes and finally settles into the true consciousness in which constant union with the Mother is possible.

22-4-1936

SRI AUROBINDO

## SRI AUROBINDO AND AESTHETICS

(Continued from the previous issue)

### *Author's Note*

*In an exposition of this kind of Sri Aurobindo's æsthetics, 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 æsthetics. 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.*

### (12) SRI AUROBINDO'S CRITICAL WRITINGS

SRI AUROBINDO'S critical power is as great as his creative genius. He is poet and critic, philosopher and mystic. His synthetic perception proceeds directly from his many-faceted personality.

The catholicity of his literary judgments has already been commented upon. Sri Aurobindo takes into account the essential force and beauty and the scope of a poet's work as a whole while evaluating it. Goethe struck much deeper than Shakespeare and he was also incomparably the greater intellect. But he is ranked below Shakespeare because he was a poet by choice rather than by the very necessity of his being. Homer, Shakespeare, Valmiki and Vyasa are considered the world's greatest poets. Aeschylus, Sophocles, Dante, Kalidasa, Virgil and Milton are placed next. These are not poetic demiurges creating a world of their own. For instance, Dante's triple world beyond is more constructed by the poetic seeing mind than by a kind of elemental demiurgic power. Shelley, Keats and Wordsworth have written nothing on a larger scale which would place them among the greatest creators. "If Keats had finished *Hyperion* (without spoiling it), if Shelley had lived, or if Wordsworth had not petered out like a motor car with insufficient petrol, it might be different, but we have to take things as they are....If they had to be admitted, what about at least fifty others in Europe and Asia?" (p. 303. *Letters*. 3rd series).

How careful Sri Aurobindo was in assessing literary work can be seen from what he writes regarding W.B. Yeats and AE: "One must recognise his (Yeats') great artistry in language and verse in which he is far superior to AE. Just as AE as a man and a seer was far superior to Yeats....AE's thought and way of seeing and saying things is much more sympathetic to me than Yeats' who only touches a brilliant floating skirt-edge of the truth of things—but I cannot allow that to influence me when I have to judge of the poetic side of their respective achievements." (pp. 308-9. L. 3.)

Sri Aurobindo's is quintessential criticism. While reading *The Future Poetry*, one is fascinated by the manner in which he sums up a poet or a movement in a few luminous and packed sentences. He captures in a paragraph or two the soul of a literary epoch or an entire aspect of the poetic mind. Nothing can be more *satisfying* to the mind and convincing to the reason than his estimate of a writer or a movement; for his approach is always fundamental,—from the root to the branch and the branch to the root. His description of a 'national' literature, his summing up of the essential quality of Greek, Latin, French or English poetry; his account of English poetry as the product of the fusion of the Anglo-Saxon and the Celtic mind, a fusion from which spring its characteristic excellences and limitations; the distinction between ancient and modern poetry; the fascinating survey of Elizabethan, neo-classical and romantic poetry; the description of the form, style and rhythm of the future poetry; the most original and revealing discussion of the capacities and incapacities of free verse; the account of the various grades of perfection in style:—all these captivate the heart and dazzle the intellect of any student of literature who reads *The Future Poetry*. His brief estimates of poets like Blake, Wordsworth, Shelley or Keats open up vistas which it would be hard to find in volumes of criticism on these poets. It is intuitive criticism offered by a seer and prophet.

One has to be grateful to the disciples of Sri Aurobindo for having tapped the mind of the Master on all kinds of subjects connected with poetry and art and made him reply to letters inviting enough by the innocence and tempting enough by the ignorance or the sophistication displayed in them. It was always an inexhaustible fountain of light and genius that was thus released into play by their casual approach. The letters carry their inimitable wisdom and vast knowledge lightly and gracefully. They are an indispensable addition to Sri Aurobindo's aesthetic pronouncements, though frequently informal in their wording, as is only to be expected. The master plays with an idea or image, word or sound; refutes current estimates, corrects by an olympian glance critical misapprehensions; and takes us through numerous ways to the primordial source of song. He lets fall casually, in two or three letters, a whole

body of aesthetics! An angelic humour flashes across the letters like gentle lightning now and then and the style is almost always limpid and crystalline, its lyric beauty contrasting sweetly with the architectural and epic grandeur of his major prose. What these letters convey is absorbed like light itself. One can read them a hundred times and feel the immortal freshness and infinite variety of their eternal wisdom. These are the most revealing body of letters in the English language outside Keats's and even more important for the future of poetry and of literary criticism.

Sri Aurobindo can make gentle and quiet fun of the philosopher. While commenting on the inadequacy of Croce's theory of art as expression, he says that he cannot conceive of a genius without the power of the word or of translating image into visible form and refers to the impossible phenomenon of 'a mute inglorious Shakespeare' and a 'rather helpless and ineffective Angelo'. The magnificent mockery of his comments on Bertrand Russell's disparagement of 'introverts' reveals a new tone. The superb irony of his comments on Anatole France's fling at God meets and surpasses a master of irony on his own ground.

Sri Aurobindo makes in these letters several distinctions which are invaluable for the student of literature. He describes the new *gunas* cultivated in modern poetry and analyses some of those handed down by tradition. The austere manner in poetry and spontaneous exuberance; nobility as contrasted with forcefulness and vigour; nobility and grandeur; beauty and greatness; greatness and perfection; inspired loveliness of fancy and a powerful vision of the occult or the spiritual; symbolism and allegory; sunlight and moonlight utterance; symbolic and mystic poetry:—all these throw a new light on the aims and methods of poetry.

On a number of well-known topics, which have served as grist for so many critical mills, Sri Aurobindo comments from a new angle and brings out some aspect, not noticed before, but recognised as soon as it is known: ballad rhythm and epic movement; the description of classical poetry as fundamentally a poetry of the poetical intelligence; folk songs and nursery rhymes; the secret soul of rhythm; the Alexandrine, octosyllabics and blank verse; and Sri Aurobindo's own theory of quantitative metre. He thinks that free verse is justified only when it has the fullness of choric utterance. But he is constantly aware of its limitations and makes exquisite fun of it in one of his letters: "Mixed anapaest and iamb make a most beautifully flexible lyric rhythm. It has no more connection with free verse than the constellation of the Great Bear has to do with a cat's tail" (p 178 L 3.) His enunciation of the 'principle of a free intonation' in verse,—i.e. a more complete subordination of the metrical insistence to the inner suggestion of the movement, where the tone builds the verse and treats

## MOTHER INDIA

metre only as a flexible convenience and a needed restraint, is of great significance for the future of poetry. Equally important are his remarks on the recovery of the supreme power of speech that the Elizabethans had, on a higher and loftier level,—finding the direct revealing word and intimate image for the full intuitive manner.

There are, in these letters, fascinating estimates of writers as wide apart as D.H. Lawrence and Bernard Shaw. Essays have also been written by Sri Aurobindo on Indian writers of genius like Kalidasa and Bankim and on topics like the national value of art. There are, besides, his monumental studies in the secret of the Veda, the meaning of the Upanishads and the message of the Gita which combine 'research', intuitive vision, scholarship and interpretative power in a marvellous manner. Certain passages and chapters in philosophic works like *The Life Divine*, *The Synthesis of Yoga* and *The Human Cycle* light up the secret springs of art and reveal its intimate relations with the spirit. In *Savitri* and in poems like *Ahana* one frequently comes across passages of great beauty where one is invited to bathe in those very springs of being from which poetry and art take their origin.

We hear in these writings a sovereign voice that chants a new poetry and teaches a new aesthetic. We behold the Master at work as a literary critic of astonishing power and range, of unsurpassed depth of insight, width of outlook and height of vision; a seer who, moving with ease among the literatures of the East and West, initiates a multitudinous, full-throated utterance that is going to be the *Mantra* of a new civilisation.

(Concluded)

V. K. GOKAK

## THY ASSAULT OF GOLDEN PEACE

Thy luminous charge of golden peace comes down  
    Smiting the cold  
Ethers of grey unrest and the black frown  
    Of mire's ancient mould.

The heart is rent with sudden unbound joys;  
    The thought is still;  
Mute has become the titan outward voice.  
    Inscrutable,

Thy burning strides of all-engulfing force  
    And majestic sweep  
Married to kinetic light of immense repose  
    Glorious, deep

Descend on earth—a marvel of ocean-fire  
    Bringing a vast  
Welkin of white immaculate desire  
    Of holocaust.

And Thy omnipotence comes myriad-armed  
    With flaming peace  
To cleave our hearts—dense, shadowed and death-charmed—  
    With eternities

Of Thy pure ever-awake supernal blaze,  
    Till all our swoon  
Becomes a calm altar to bear Thy rays,  
    Thy God-bright noon!

ROMEN

# MATTER AND LIFE

## A SCRUTINY OF SCIENTIFIC OPINIONS

THE question before us is: "What conclusions are to be drawn from the findings of science on what is called organic nature as commonly distinguished from inorganic? In other words, does science point towards the validity of the common distinction or does it indicate life to be merely a certain state of complex matter and ultimately reducible to physico-chemical terms?" We need not accept science as the final arbiter, but it would be illuminating to see whether a branch of inquiry which has great influence on philosophic thought today and which at one time was almost unanimously taken to "debunk" all non-materialism does actually offer any evidence worth considering against a non-materialistic view of the nature of life.

Here we shall restrict the word "science" to biology proper and not draw upon either physics or else psychology under test conditions. We shall put on one side both the revolution in physics and the recent statistically measured evidence for telepathy and precognition. Taking biology as our sole domain, we shall deal exclusively with the living organism and examine the deliverances of science concerning it. Such a procedure of independent examination, by setting up more stringent conditions, will not definitively demonstrate materialism in the biological field if the other domains of science contradict whatever materialistic probabilities may be found here but it will enormously strengthen the general case of non-materialism if the balance is tilted in its favour in this domain no less than in those two. At the same time, since there will be no leaning on the latter and non-materialism will be affirmed on purely biological grounds, we shall be in a position even to extend it towards the interpretation of physics and experimental psychology wherever the issue may hang undecided in them.

### I

There is no doubt that an enormous amount of elucidation of the living organism's functions has been made in physico-chemical terms during the last thirty years. Of course many processes are still without physico-chemical interpretation; yet it will not do just to build on mere gaps in knowledge. Gap after gap has gone on being filled since Wohler and Liebig in 1828 first created in the laboratory what were called "organic compounds"—substances like urea, sugar, etc., which had been produced up to that time in the organism alone. And this is

but as it should be; for, even if life transcends the material formula it must be expected to make abundant use of material "mechanisms" since it is operating with a close material companion and its appearance on earth was a late event in the history of matter, an intervention in the midst of considerably advanced physico-chemical complexity. The point is whether all gaps are of the kind that have been filled. If possible, we must try to get beyond what the organism *does*, to what the organism *is*: we must catch hold of something central to the vital phenomenon and ask if that too is reducible to physico-chemical activity. That and nothing else would be the crucial test science would have to pass before it could be called upon to declare that the materialistic working-method which is legitimate to it for the extension of analytic and descriptive knowledge has come across a "Thus far and no further".

Could we say that science's failure to synthesise life in the laboratory must give pause to that working-method? Let us cast a glance at the existing situation here. A huge hurdle in the way of artificial synthesis of living matter was indicated in 1938 by Professor Horatio Hackett Newman of the United States. He wrote that not even the first step had been taken—the step of synthesising the protein molecule which is the chemical *differentia* of living matter. Within a decade Dr. Robert B. Woodward and Dr. C. R. Schramm made a rough protein molecule which had all the qualities of hair or fur. How far this brings us to the production of living stuff in the laboratory is to be gauged from three discoveries.

All organic development is founded on the living cell which consists of an outer skin with a fluid mass inside and a central section of nucleus: it is the cell that has to be finally synthesised. Now, the possibility of its synthesis has been greatly encouraged by the discovery of a form of matter midway between the organised cell and a protein molecule: the deadly filter-passing viruses which have been examined under the electron microscope. Chemically the virus is an overgrown protein molecule and it can exist in an utterly inanimate condition in a crystalline form resembling salt. But as soon as it is put in living tissue it ceases to be a crystal and begins to eat, grow and multiply. Even when as a crystal it has been cut up by Dr. W.N. Stanley of the Rockefeller Institute for Medical Research, its progeny during its stay in living tissue has been like the original parent, not like the physically mutilated one. Exactly like a normal living cell it acts to perpetuate its original structure. A recent report from Copenhagen has it that scientists have succeeded in marking also in it the one factor that had distinguished the cell from it, namely, organic behaviour in even a test-tube and not only in a living host. So, with its capacity to be completely crystalline as well as completely organic, it is a definite link between the undeniably living and the apparently non-living. Even without the Copenhagen report, it would be a recognisable bridge.



Further, in what precise relation it stands to the cell is shown by the fact revealed by the electron microscope that the part of the cell known as the gene—the physical basis of inheritance—is very similar to the virus and may be described, in Professor Newman's words, as a tamed or domesticated virus-like particle incorporated in the cell's complex economy. The cell itself is thus likely to have been in remote times a development of viruslike matter and is as good as demonstrated to be evolutionarily connected with the world of inorganic crystals.

That it is some sort of development has been indicated too along another line of research. A Russian woman scientist, Dr. O.B. Lepeshinskaya, whose experiments are said to have been confirmed by scientists in Norway, England and the United States, took materials from the cells, pieces that did not even include the important nucleus which used to be considered the repository of life's secret, and she found that they not only were composed in the main of protein molecules but could develop by themselves, act to preserve themselves when disturbed and in several other ways also pass tests which proved them to be alive. Her conclusion was that while the cell is the basic unit of organised life it has come about from an assortment of organic chemicals which are themselves alive: it is a patterned development following somehow upon their combination. This conclusion is suggestively in tune with Dr. Woodward's observation during his synthesis of the protein molecule. To quote a report by Maurice Hecht: "He merely took some amino-acids, previously made from ordinary chemicals in the laboratory, and put two or more of them together after certain modifications and left them alone. The mixture was allowed to stand for two weeks. The amino-acids carried on the rest of the work on their own." From this it seems most probable that for creating life in the laboratory "we may not have to create a complete cell at all. When we succeed in creating the right chemical combination, we may not need to do any more—the cell may grow out of that on its own." The synthesis of life is thus immeasurably facilitated.

We should not be surprised if in the near future it is actually accomplished. And its significance primarily would just be that conditions obtaining at some point in the far past have got duplicated experimentally with the same results as then. The original evolution of the living cell from matter would be proved before our very eyes and the chemical mode of it broadly exemplified. But that would not prove life to be nothing else than a new form of matter: it would only prove that material conditions came to be such that life could appear in them—unless we were also able to prove that nothing inexplicable in purely physico-chemical terms had appeared. So, once more we return to

## MATTER AND LIFE

the problem whether in the phenomenon of life science has struck upon something centrally irreducible to these terms.

To sum up the situation: science's materialistic working-method need not feel stuck against a barrier impossible to cross because life has not been artificially synthesised yet—and the reason is that far from the chances being against such synthesis it is most likely that pretty soon we shall have protein combinations coming alive in our test-tubes—but, on the other hand, even this wonderful success cannot fundamentally dispose of non-materialism from the scientific viewpoint, for everything will hinge on the reducibility or non-reducibility of what may be regarded as the central characteristic of organic nature to physics and chemistry.

Our task then is to address ourselves to the scientific isolation of this characteristic and to measure against it the physico-chemical.

*(To be continued)*

K. D. SETHNA

## SRI AUROBINDO: HIS PHILOSOPHY AND YOGA

(Continued from the previous issue)

(This concludes the second talk given by A. B. Purani under the auspices of the Calcutta University. Dr. S.C. Chatterjee, M.A., Ph.D., Lecturer in Philosophy, Calcutta University, presided.)

WHAT did the Master do in order to realise his great vision? He devoted 40 years of his precious life to the understanding and knowledge of the gathering Consciousness for the realisation of it. From 1926, November 24, when the descent took place of the Overmind Consciousness into his physical consciousness, he undertook seriously to create a pattern of society, a new pattern of collective life made of people devoted to this ideal of life, who came seeking to him for the life which he alone could give. A new pattern of collective life, in which egocentricity would be absent and life—individual and collective—centred round the Divine Mother would flower, has been brought into existence, and such a life is more full, more beautiful because the Divine is in the centre of it. If humanity could succeed in creating a collectivity in which the dynamic Truth-Consciousness would operate, if the Grace would descend to the depths of the human consciousness in answer to man's aspiration, then man's problems would be solved. As far as success was intended by the Divine, he has succeeded and success is sure because it is not mere man's work. In *Savitri* he wrote:

*How shall the end be vain when God is guide?*

My friend, the President, has asked me to say something about Sri Aurobindo's *Sadhana*. It is an impossible task. His *Sadhana* is not like one ocean, but oceans and oceans and oceans. The lines from *Thought the Paraclete*:

*Plunged in dream-caught Spirit immensities,  
Past the long green crests of the seas of life,  
Past the orange skies of the mystic mind...*

*Hungering large-souled to surprise the unconned  
Secrets white-fire-veiled of the last Beyond,  
Crossing power-swept silences rapture-stunned,  
Climbing high far ethers eternal-sunned...*

would give some idea of the vastness of the realm of his experience. Who can gauge the depth of his *Sadhana*? I asked him once whether he would permit

me to help a Marathi gentleman in compiling his biography. He replied: "No, I don't want to be murdered by my own disciples in cold print. Who can write my biography? It has not been on the surface for man to see." We all know there have been attempts even in Bengali to write his biography and people who know next to nothing about him have written them.

He began his Sadhana long ago in 1903 or 1904 at Baroda. He was at the same time taking a plunge in politics. In the whirlwind of those stormy days of the Indian struggle for independence he found that his Sadhana had received no attention. He wanted to get guidance for his Sadhana from some one. Barin, his brother, arranged to call Vishnu Bhaskar Lele, a Maharastrian Yogi, to Baroda. Sri Aurobindo met him after the famous Surat Congress. This was in 1908. Lele put down the condition that if he wanted to have some definite experience in Sadhana he would have to withdraw himself—for some time at least—from politics. Sri Aurobindo consented. They both retired to the house of Sardar Majumdar of Baroda where Lele asked Sri Aurobindo to still his mind. He did that in three days. What happened then was hardly expected by Lele. As soon as his mind was silenced, Sri Aurobindo got the realisation of the silent Brahman. All forces, all movements appeared quite superficial on the vast background of this silent Brahmic consciousness. He has described it in one of his poems, *Nirvana*. This was one of the decisive experiences of his Sadhana.

The second experience of a decisive character came to him almost in the wake of the first one. We must remember that he was one of the foremost leaders of Indian politics. He had to meet public engagements. In fact, immediately he went to Bombay from Baroda he was called upon to address political meetings. His mind had fallen into stillness. So, he asked Lele what he should do. Lele told him that he should bow down to the audience as Narayana and then a voice would speak through him. Sri Aurobindo did as he was advised and found that some voice began to speak through him. This gave him the clue to the final discovery of the dynamic Divine.

The third experience of great importance came to him when he was in Alipore jail. You have the record of it in his famous *Uttarpara Speech* which will go down to the future as a landmark in human evolution. There he got the realisation of the Divine in himself and in all around him. This Divine gave him the vision of his future life-work for humanity. It gave him the integral vision of man's divine perfection.

Thereafter his life did not belong to him—it was under the direction of the Divine. The development of his Sadhana under that guidance came to a climax when the Overmind consciousness of the Divine descended into his physical being on 24th November, 1926.

## MOTHER INDIA

Thereafter he took up the work of helping others to get the Light, to the moulding of a new pattern of humanity. The four different phases of his Sadhana can be put as—(1) Attainment of the silent Brahmic consciousness; (2) realisation of the dynamic aspect of the Divine; (3) realisation of the Divine in himself and all; (4) realisation of the Overmind Consciousness of the Divine in the physical, preparing for the ultimate victory of the Supermind.

What he wrote in *Savitri* applies to him with an aptness that is striking. The Divine Mother there is asking Aswapathy not to discontinue his labours though they may seem not to bear any fruit. She says:

*“How shall thy mighty Spirit brook repose  
While Death is still unconquered on the earth  
And Time a field of suffering and pain?”*

Nor will his Spirit cease working till the work is done. The Divine Mother further commands Aswapathy:

*“Leave not the light to die the ages bore,  
Help still Humanity’s blind and suffering life...  
  
Ask not the imperfect fruit, the partial prize.  
Only one boon, to greaten thy Spirit, demand;  
Only one joy, to raise thy kind, desire.  
Above blind faith and the antagonist powers  
Moveless there stands a high unchanging Will;  
To its Omnipotence leave thy work’s result.  
All things shall change in God’s transfiguring hour.”*

These lines convey to us some glimpse of his life-work which was and is equally the Divine’s work on earth—the manifestation of life divine.

\* \* \*

At the end of the lecture, Dr. Chatterjee said: “As the discourse has been brought to a glorious finis, it is my pleasant duty to offer our heart-felt thanks to the learned lecturer on behalf of all of you and on behalf of myself as well. If any impression has been created on our mind by these two discourses delivered by one who was for long thirty years a close associate of the great Light that lived in the physical frame for a number of years in this motherland of ours, that impression is that we see the whole picture of the world transformed before our eyes. He has opened up new vistas of life and experience before our mind. He has drawn a lively picture of the Divine Being as it works in the mundane plane and he has given us a glorious view of the ultimate victory of the Transcendent Spirit who has for the time being lost Himself in this world of finite and fragmentary beings but who would have his Delight infinitely

multiplied when he sees that out of the inconscient, out of the apparently unconscious, out of the broken and fragmentary, there is the restoration of the Perfect, the Infinite, the Full, the Integral Life of the Divine. Things are not as we are disposed to think in our ordinary life. Man is not an isolated, deserted, forlorn being in the ocean of life. There is within him something which makes him more than a man. The present idea of man as it is prevalent in the West and as it has also percolated from the West to the East is that man is a rational animal. This idea, I am disposed to say on the authority of the lecturer to whom we have listened with so much interest and so much of rapt attention, is a very imperfect idea, a very shallow and superficial conception of man. If we are to be truer to the nature of man, then we have to say that man is a spiritual being who is overlaid all round him—who is overlaid above, overlaid below, overlaid on all sides—by a superconscient and by a cosmic consciousness. It is man's ego-centric predicament, it is man's wilful limitation of his great spiritual being to the centre of an isolated individuality that makes him ignorant of the life and light that are working within him and outside him and all round him. If man can somehow transcend the egoism in him, if he can break the fetters that bind him to the physical realm, if he can open up his heart, his mind, to this luminous life, this living light, he is sure to get that Light, that Life, which will raise him to a plane of existence that is as great, as high and as lofty as that of the Divinity Himself. Sri Aurobindo, we know, attained illumination but one thing that is remarkable about him is this: After the attainment of this Illumination, he did not live a passive life, he refused to spend the rest of his life in isolation and in inactivity. Far from it. He devoted himself to a nobler aim, to a higher purpose which we may say to be the same as the Divine purpose, namely, the spiritualisation of the whole range of existence and, especially, the spiritualisation of the human kingdom. He applied himself, with all the energy and all the concentration that was given to him to possess, to work for the regeneration of all other Souls in the universe. His devotion to the cause of suffering humanity, his ardent desire for the moral uplift of degraded humanity, his concern for the liberation of ignorant humanity defy all powers of expression that I may possibly possess. I will end with only one thing more:

“May the Light that Sri Aurobindo brought to this world, may the Sadhana that he has performed for so many years of his life, may his divine efforts to bring down the Divinity on the plane of human existence,—may all this come to success. May It bring peace to the war-worried world, may It bring happiness to unhappy mankind, may It bring salvation to all Souls.

“Once more we offer our heart-felt thanks to the distinguished lecturer.”

## SRI AUROBINDO AND THE UPANISHADS

(Continued from the *previous issue*)

### III

One in many births, a single ocean holder of all streams of movement, sees our hearts. (Rig Veda)<sup>1</sup>

The Unseen, incommunicable, unseizable, featureless, unthinkable, undesignable by Name, self-evident in its one self-hood that is the Self, this is That which has to be known. (Mandukya Upanishad)<sup>2</sup>

The one Godhead secret in all beings, all-pervading, the inner Self of all. (Svetasvetara Upanishad)<sup>3</sup>

Thou art That, O Svetaketu. (Chhandogya Upanishad)<sup>4</sup>

The Spirit who is here in man and the Spirit who is there in the Sun, lo, it is One Spirit and there is no other (Taittiriya Upanishad)<sup>5</sup>

Two are joined together, powers of Truth, powers of Maya,—they have built the Child and given him birth and they nourish his growth. (Rig Veda)<sup>6</sup>

ALTHOUGH there is no single system of philosophy as such in the Upanishads, we do find in them certain broad lines of spiritual experience rendered as much as possible in terms of the conceptual language of the Intellect. In the course of their inner disciplines which they developed in their endeavour to exceed the normal bounds of the body, life and mind, to push to the farthest frontiers of

<sup>1</sup> Or: the one, the ocean holding the wealths, within our heart of multiple births, widely does he see.

एकः समुद्रो धरुणो रयीणामस्मद्दृढो भूरिजन्मा विचष्टे (X. 5 1.)

<sup>2</sup> अदृष्टमव्यवहार्यमग्राह्यमलक्षणमचिन्त्यमव्यपदेश्यमेकात्मप्रत्ययसारं . . स आत्मा स विज्ञेयः । (7)

<sup>3</sup> एको देवः सर्वभूतेषु गूढ सर्वव्यापी सर्वभूतान्तरात्मा । (VI. 11)

<sup>4</sup> तत्वमसि श्वेतकेतो । (VI. 8. 7.)

<sup>5</sup> स यश्चायं पुरुषे यश्चासावादित्ये । स एकः । (III 10 4)

<sup>6</sup> ऋतायिनी मायिनी संदधाते मित्वा शिशुं जज्ञतुर्वर्धयन्ती । (X. 5. 3.)

knowledge accessible to the human spirit and attain to the realisation of utmost identity with Truth at the fount and core of things, these sages of ancient India had come upon certain fundamental truths of the Universe, both the outer and the inner, and perceived that within their large ambience there were an infinite number of variations, parallel or contradictory movements even. In a series of Essays (unfortunately left incomplete) under the title *Philosophy of the Upanishads*<sup>1</sup> Sri Aurobindo deals at considerable length with this discovery and its results—the discovery which, he observes, “in its importance to the future of human knowledge dwarfs the divinations of Newton and Galileo; even the discovery of the inductive and experimental method in Science was not more momentous; for they (the ancient seers) discovered down to its ultimate processes the method of Yoga and by the method of Yoga they rose to three crowning realisations.”

Behind all the multiplicity and fluidity of things they beheld a Unity and Stability of which all phenomena are seemings and appearances. This Reality, they realised, is something Absolute, transcendent of all, transcendent even of Time and Space. This One, they declared, is the *nityo'nityānām*, the One Eternal in the many transient.

Secondly, they found that this transcendent Self of things is also the self of all living beings; the eye of the yogins perceived that this is the One Intelligence working behind all the myriad forms of the intelligences (and non-intelligences), *cetanascetanānām*, One Consciousness in many consciousnesses.

Third: they attained a realisation of the most momentous consequence to man, viz they realised that there is an identity between the true Self in the individual man and the Self in the Universe or the universal Self One who knows his whole Self *knows* the whole Universe.<sup>2</sup> And since the universal Self is again the same as the Transcendent, the individual Self finds its identity with the It, the Absolute, the Brahman. This truth is enshrined in the two famous formulas *so'ham* and *aham brahmāsmi*, He am I and I am Brahman the Eternal.

The Supreme Reality, the Brahman of the Upanishads is Absolute and Transcendent. Featureless and incommunicable, it is beyond pragmatic relations. It cannot be known and it cannot be described. Itself Infinite, it cannot be the subject of knowledge by the mind and senses which are but finite; similarly, finite

<sup>1</sup> Written by Sri Aurobindo when he was in Baroda, these manuscripts were recovered recently after over forty years, in an unexpected manner, and were published serially in the ADVENT Quarterly (1951 November—1953 February).

<sup>2</sup> आत्मनि खल्वरे दृष्टे श्रुते मते विज्ञात इद सर्वं विदितम् । When the Self is seen, listened to, thought upon and perfectly known, then indeed all this is perfectly known. (Brihadaranyaka Upanishad. IV.5.6)



speech cannot cover the Infinite<sup>1</sup> However, this is true only of Brahman in its ultimate reality, not in its aspects or manifestations. Even the Ultimate Reality, the Upanishads assert, though it cannot be known by the mind, can be realised and attained. One can realise it by one's own self, in one's own being and this realisation includes as a part of it or as a result of it, a *kind* of knowledge also, the knowledge of Brahman by identity. But the way of getting into this awareness is not through intellect and its normal aids. Acharya Shankara recalls a telling story in this connection which can well bear repetition here.

King Vashkalin questioned Bahva the Sage about Brahman. "Learn Brahman, O friend," said Bahva and remained silent. The king asked a second time and

<sup>1</sup> न तत्र चक्षुर्गच्छति न वाग् गच्छति नो मनः । न विद्मो न विजानीमो यथैतदनुशिष्यात् ॥

There light attains not nor space attains, nor the mind. We know not nor can we discover how one should teach of That (Kena Upanishad I. 3)

यतो वाचो निवर्तन्ते अप्राप्य मनसा सह, from which words turn away without attaining and the mind also retires baffled. (Taittiriya Upanishad. II. 4.)

विज्ञानाद्यद्वरिष्ठं प्रजानाम्, beyond the knowledge of creatures (Mundaka II. 2, I).

*Vide* an interesting dialogue in the Brihadaranyaka, driving home the sheer inability of mental understanding to grasp the nature of Brahman:

"Then Gargi Vacaknavi questioned him.

Yajnavalkya, (said she), since all this world is woven, warp and woof, on water, on what, pray, is the water woven, warp and woof?

On Wind, O Gargi.

On what then, pray, is the wind woven, warp and woof?

On the atmosphere-worlds, O Gargi.

On what then, pray, are the atmosphere-worlds woven, warp and woof?

On the worlds of the Gandharvas, O Gargi.

On what then, pray, are the worlds of the Gandharvas woven, warp and woof?

On the worlds of the sun, O Gargi.

On what then, pray, are the worlds of the sun woven, warp and woof?

On the worlds of the moon, O Gargi.

On what then, pray, are the worlds of the moon woven, warp and woof?

On the worlds of the stars, O Gargi.

On what then, pray, are the worlds of the stars woven, warp and woof?

On the worlds of the gods, O Gargi.

On what then, pray, are the worlds of the gods woven, warp and woof?

On the worlds of Indra, O Gargi.

On what then, pray, are the worlds of Indra woven, warp and woof?

On the worlds of Prajapati, O Gargi.

On what then, pray, are the worlds of Prajapati woven, warp and woof?

On the worlds of Brahma, O Gargi.

On what then, pray, are the worlds of Brahma woven, warp and woof?

Yajnavalkya said: Gargi, *do not question too much, lest your head fall off*. In truth, you are questioning too much about a divinity about which further questions cannot be asked. Gargi, do not over-question" (III. 6. Tr R. E. Hume)

then the third time whereupon he replied: "I am, indeed, telling you but you do not understand. Silent is that Self."<sup>1</sup>

The intellect is not the only means of knowing. There are other faculties latent in man which have larger and larger ranges and can, when awakened and active, give higher and still higher knowledge.<sup>2</sup> With means such as these centred in the self, the Brahman is to be sought, known and realised<sup>3</sup> progressively on any or each of the successive levels of His manifestation. For, this phenomenal universe that we see is not the immediate creation of Brahman. There are other universal extensions between this universe of gross matter and the Brahman in his first poise of manifestation. Thus, surrounding this universe of gross matter where the Brahman is manifest as the Virat, the Mighty One, Ruler, Self, is the universe of subtle matter where He is the Hiranya Garbha, the Golden Embryo of life and form, Creator, Self; surrounding both is another universe—that of causal matter where Brahman is manifest as the Cause, Self and Inspirer, Prajna, the Wise One. Beyond the universe of Causal matter is the fourth state regarding which we cannot do better than quote Sri Aurobindo himself:

"The truth then seems to be that there are even in this last or fourth state of the Self, stages and degrees, as to the number of which experience varies; but for all practical purposes we may speak of three, the first when we stand at the entrance of the porch and look within; the second when we stand at the inner extremity of the porch and are really face to face with the Eternal; the third when we enter into the Holy of Holies. Be it remembered that the language I am using is the language of metaphor and must not be pressed with a savage literalness. Well then, the first state is well within the possible experience of man and from it man returns to be a Jivanmukta, one who lives and is yet released in his inner self from the bondage of phenomenal existence; the second stage once reached, man does not ordinarily return, unless he is a supreme Buddha—or perhaps as a world Avatar; from the third stage none returns, nor is it attainable in the body. Brahman as realised by the Jivanmukta, seen from the entrance of the porch, is that which we usually term Parabrahman, the Supreme Eternal and the subject of the most exalted descriptions of the Vedanta. There are therefore five conditions of Brahman. Brahman Virat, Master of the Waking Universe; Brahman

<sup>1</sup> *Brahmasutra Bhashyam* (III. 2. 17)

<sup>2</sup> दृश्यते त्वग्रचया बुद्ध्या सूक्ष्मया सूक्ष्मदर्शिभिः Yet is He seen by the seers of the subtle by a subtle and perfect understanding. (*Katha Upanishad*. I. 3. 12.)

<sup>3</sup> सत्येन लभ्यस्तपसा सम्यग् ज्ञानेन ब्रह्मचर्येण नित्यम् won by truth, by self-discipline, by integral knowledge, by a life of purity. (*Mundaka Upanishad*. III. 1. 5.)

विद्यया तपसा चिन्तया चोपलभ्यते ब्रह्म । By vidya, by austerity, by meditation Brahma is apprehended (*Maitri Upanishad*. IV. 4.)

Hiranya Garbha, of the Dream Universe; Brahman Prajna or Avyakta of the Trance Universe of Unmanifestation; Parabrahman, the Highest; and that which is higher than the highest, the Unknowable.”<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *Philosophy of the Upanishads* (Advent 1952 February)

Cf. Sri Aurobindo's graphic description (in his epic *Savitri*) of the successive manifestations of the Supreme Creative Spirit that greet the soaring Soul in humanity in its highest adventure:

“ the architect of the visible world,  
 At once the art and artist of his works,  
 Spirit and seer and thinker of things seen,  
 Virat, who lights his camp-fires in the suns  
 And the star-entangled ether is his hold,  
 Expressed himself with Matter for his speech  
 Objects are his letters, forces are his words,  
 Events are the crowded history of his life,  
 And sea and land are the pages of his tale,  
 Matter is his means and his spiritual sign;  
 He hangs the thought upon a lash's lift,  
 In the current of the blood makes flow the soul.  
 His is the dumb will of atom and of clod;  
 A Will that without sense or motive acts,  
 An Intelligence needing not to think or plan,  
 The world creates itself invincibly;  
 For its body is the body of the Lord  
 And in its heart stand Virat, King of kings.  
 In him shadows his form the Golden Child  
 Who in the Sun-capped Vast cradles his birth:  
 Hiranyagarbha, author of thoughts and dream,  
 Who sees the invisible and hears the sounds  
 That never visited a mortal ear,  
 Discoverer of unthought realities,  
 Truer to Truth than all we have ever known,  
 He is the leader on the inner roads;  
 A seer, he has entered the forbidden realms,  
 A magician with the omnipotent wand of thought,  
 He builds the secret uncreated worlds.  
 Armed with the golden speech, the diamond eye,  
 His is the vision and the prophecy  
 Imagist casting the formless into shape,  
 Traveller and hewer of the unseen paths,  
 He is the carrier of the hidden fire,  
 He is the voice of the Ineffable,  
 He is the invisible hunter of the light,  
 The Angel of mysterious ecstasies,  
 The conqueror of the kingdoms of the soul.  
 A third spirit stood behind, their hidden cause,

If we view the same Reality from the other end, i.e. from where creation starts, the sequence we get is naturally in the inverse order. There is, first, the Absolute which is beyond the terms of human understanding. We can only begin conveniently with the Parabrahman who is the front of the Transcendent Supreme turned and poised for manifestation. This Parabrahman is called variously God, the Eternal, the Creator, the Ancient of Days. The seers of Vedanta speak of Him in a double trilogy: subjectively, He is the Sat-Chit-Ananda, Existence, Consciousness, Bliss; objectively, Satyam, Jnanam, Anantam, Truth, Knowledge, Infinity.

He is the supreme, the absolute Existence, because there is nothing else that is outside of Him. He exists by Himself, subject to nothing. Space, Time, Causality are created by Him, out of Himself as conditions of manifestation; they do not contain Him, they are contained in Him.<sup>1</sup> He is the Absolute

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A mass of superconscience closed in light,  
 Creator of things in his all-knowing sleep.  
 All from his stillness came as grows a tree;  
 He is our seed and core, our head and base.  
 All light is but a flash from his closed eyes:  
 An all-wise Truth is mystic in his heart,  
 The omniscient Ray is shut behind his lids:  
 He is the Wisdom that comes not by thought,  
 His wordless silence brings the immortal word.  
 He sleeps in the atom and the burning star,  
 He sleeps in man and god and beast and stone.  
 Because he is there the Inconscient does its work,  
 Because he is there the world forgets to die,  
 He is the centre of the circle of God,  
 He is the circumference of Nature's sun.  
 His slumber is an Almightyness in things,  
 Awake, he is the Eternal and Supreme.  
 Above was the brooding bliss of the Infinite,  
 Its omniscient and omnipotent repose,  
 Its immobile silence absolute and alone.

(Book Eleven, Canto I)

<sup>1</sup> एतस्मिन् खल्वक्षरे . . . आकाश ओतश्च प्रोतश्च :

Across this Immutable, verily, is space woven, warp & woof. (Brihadaranyaka Upanishad. III. 8 11.)

यस्मिन् आकाशश्च प्रतिष्ठितः in whom Space is established (Brihadaranyaka Upanishad. IV. 4. 17.)

ईशानं भूतभव्यस्य . Lord of what has been and of what is to be. (Brihadaranyaka Upanishad. IV. 4. 15.)

अन्यत्र भूताच्च भव्याच्च, otherwhere than in that which has been and that which shall be. (Kathā Upanishad. I. 2. 14.)

Existence. He is also Absolute Consciousness; consciousness is not an attribute, but the very nature of his Existence. The Sat and the Chit are in fact the same. Wherever Sat is, in whatever form, there is the inalienable Chit, whatever the appearance. Like Sat, Chit also exists by itself and depends upon nothing for its existence as Pure Awareness. Finally, this Supreme is Pure Bliss. Like Consciousness which is inalienable from Existence, Bliss is inherent in Conscious Existence. The very expression of the acme of Conscious-Existence is Delight.

This Trinity of the Upanishads which is "Absolute Existence; which is therefore Absolute Consciousness; which is therefore Absolute Bliss," is paralleled by a second trinity which is really its objective expression.

Brahman is Satyam, Truth or Reality. Satyam is the Idea of Existence viewed objectively. That which exists solely by itself is alone real; Brahman is absolute existence and therefore absolute Truth and Reality.<sup>1</sup>

Similarly, Brahman is Jnanam, Knowledge; Jnanam is the idea of consciousness viewed objectively. Jnana is a direct knowledge and Brahman is Jnana absolute.

Brahman is Anantam, Endlessness, Infinity. This Infinity arises from his Absolute Bliss. There can be no bliss where there is any limitation. The idea of Bliss viewed objectively is Infinity which can be described as Freedom or Immortality. "Regarded from the point of view of Time, Brahman is Eternity or Immortality; regarded from the point of view of Space He is Infinity or Universality, regarded from the point of view of Causality He is absolute Freedom."<sup>2</sup>

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Parabrahman moves into three different habitations, three successive states of Being as His manifestation proceeds. First into the *avyakta* or the causal state where all that is to manifest is in its seed-state and He is the *Prājna*, the Master of *Prajñā*, Eternal Wisdom; next comes the subtle state where he shines

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यस्मादवाक् संवत्सरोऽहोभिः परिवर्तते । That before (below) which rolls the year with its days (Brihadaranyaka Upanishad. IV. 4. 16.)

एतस्य वा अक्षरस्य प्रशासने गर्गि निमेषा मुहूर्ता अहोरात्राण्यर्धमासा मासा ऋतवः संवत्सरा इति विधृतास्तिष्ठन्ति, Verily, O Gargi, under the mighty rule of the Immutable do the moments, the hours, the days, the nights, the fortnights, the months, the seasons stand in their position. (Brihadaranyaka Upanishad. III. 8. 9.)

<sup>1</sup> सत्यस्य सत्यम्, Real of the real. (Brihadaranyaka Upanishad. II. 1. 20.)

<sup>2</sup> Sri Aurobindo: *Philosophy of the Upanishads* III. (*Advent* 1952 April.)

as the *Hiranya Garbha*, the Golden Embryo of Life and Form, and then the condition of the gross state where he is the *Virāt*, the Cosmic Soul. This process of manifestation, of bringing out of Himself what was in Himself<sup>1</sup> for expression in what is really His own extension,<sup>2</sup> is executed by a Power which is inherent in his Being. It is his own Consciousness as Power<sup>3</sup> that works out his Intention. "It is the might of the Godhead in the world that turns the wheel of Brahman."<sup>4</sup>...the One becomes the Many by his own Power.<sup>5</sup> The older Vedantic seers called it *Māyā* because of its function of measuring out *mmīte*, the Immeasurable, its skill and cunning in shaping names and forms out of the Nameless and the Formless.<sup>6</sup> "Supreme too is his Shakti and manifold the natural working of her knowledge and her force."<sup>7</sup> They found it difficult to spot it amidst the myriad forms in which and through which it executes the Purpose. To realise its nature, says the Upanishad, "they followed after concentration of Yoga and saw the Might of the Spirit of the Lord hidden deep in the modes of workings of its own nature."<sup>8</sup> She is the *devātma-shakti*, the Energy of the Divine Self. Her relation with the Lord, Purusha as the Brahman self-conditioned in Manifestation is called, is spoken of in the Upanishads in terms of the Female and the Male, the executive and the creative aspects of Manifestation. "The Primal Existence turned towards manifestation has a double aspect, Male and Female, positive and negative. He is the origin of the birth of things and He is the receptacle of the birth and it is to the Male aspect of Himself that the word Purusha predominantly applies. The image often

<sup>1</sup> यथोर्णनाभिः सृजते गृह्णते च . . . तथाक्षरात् संभवतीह विश्वम्. As the spider puts out and gathers in. .so here all is born from the Immutable. (Mundaka Upanishad. I. 1. 17.)

<sup>2</sup> तस्यावयवभूतैस्तु व्याप्तमिदं जगत्, this whole world is filled with beings who are His members. (Svetasvetara Upanishad. IV, 10.)

विश्वस्यैकं परिवेष्टितारं . . . देवं The One God who encompasses the whole world. (Svetasvetara Upanishad. IV. 16.)

<sup>3</sup> चित् विद्या

<sup>4</sup> देवस्यैष महिमा तु लोके येनेदं भ्राम्यते ब्रह्मचक्रम् । (Svetasvetara Upanishad. VI. 1.)

<sup>5</sup> इन्द्रो मायाभिः पुरुरूप ईयते, Indra by his Maya powers (creative conscious powers) moves on endowed with many forms. (Brihadaranyaka Upanishad. II. 5. 19, cited from Rīg Veda VI. 47. 18.)

<sup>6</sup> It is this element of cunning in designing that predominated in the minds of the later thinkers and led them to call it the power of Illusion.

<sup>7</sup> परास्य शक्तिर्विधैव श्रूयते स्वाभाविकी ज्ञानबलक्रिया च (Svetasvetara Upanishad. VI. 8.)

<sup>8</sup> ते ध्यानयोगानुगता अपश्यन् देवात्मशक्तिं स्वगुणैर्निगढाम् (Svetasvetara Upanishad. I. 3.)

applied to these relations is that of the man casting his seed into the woman;<sup>1</sup> his duty is merely to originate the seed and deposit it, but it is the woman's duty to cherish the seed, develop it, bring it forth and start it on its career of manifested life. The seed, says the Upanishad, is the self of the Male, it is spirit, and being cast into the Female, Prakriti, it becomes one with her and therefore does her no hurt; spirit takes the shaping appearance of matter and does not break up the appearances of matter, but develops under their law. The Man and the Woman, universal Adam and Eve, are really one and each is incomplete without the other, barren without the other, inactive without the other. Purusha is the Male, God, is that side of the One which gives the impulse towards phenomenal existence; Prakriti the Female, Nature, is that side which is and evolves the material of phenomenal existence; both of them are therefore unborn and eternal. The Male is Purusha, he who lurks in the Wide; the Female is Prakriti, the working of the Male, and sometimes called Rayi, the universal movement emanating from the quiescent Male.<sup>2</sup> Purusha is therefore imaged as the Enjoyer, Prakriti as the enjoyed;<sup>3</sup> Purusha as the witness, Prakriti as the phenomena he witnesses; Purusha as the *getter* or father of things, Prakriti as their *bearer* or mother.<sup>4</sup> And there are many other images the Upanishad employs, Purusha, for instance, symbolising Himself in the Sun,<sup>5</sup> the father of life, and Prakriti in the Earth, the bearer of life."<sup>6</sup> (Sri Aurobindo)<sup>6</sup>

M. P. PANDIT

(To be continued)

<sup>1</sup> Aitareya Upanishad. II. 1. 2. 3.

<sup>2</sup> Prashna Upanishad. I.

<sup>3</sup> Maitri. VI. 10. Svetasvetara Upanishad. I. 12.

<sup>4</sup> Svetasvetara Upanishad. I. 9. 10.

<sup>5</sup> Brihadaranyaka Upanishad. II. 3; V. 15. 1; Chhandogya Upanishad. I. 6. 6. Maitri Upanishad. VI. 1, VI, 35; Isha Upanishad. 17.

<sup>6</sup> *Philosophy of Upamshads VI. (Advent, 1953, February).*

# THE INTEGRAL YOGA ÓF SRI AUROBINDO

## CHAPTER XVII

### THE INTEGRAL LIBERATION

#### PART II

“A DIVINE unity of supreme Spirit and its supreme nature is the integral liberation.”<sup>1</sup> In these words Sri Aurobindo indicates the essence of the liberation we aim at in the Integral Yoga. It is not only liberation from the lower nature of the three gunas into the peace and silence of the immutable Self that we seek, but liberation in the Divine, the supreme Spirit; and it cannot be fully achieved so long as our nature is not also liberated from its inferior modes into the luminous Consciousness-Force of the Supernature, Para Prakriti. For, in the Divine there is an eternal harmony between Light and Force, silence and action, status and dynamis; and unless our nature’s movements are transformed and attuned to the rhythms of the Supernature, our liberation will remain only partial—liberation only in the divine chit (consciousness) and not in His tapas (Force), only in His silence and not in His cosmic action. But an initial liberation of the Purusha is indispensable for the work of transformation and perfection; for, this work depends upon the fullness of the sadhaka’s self-surrender to the Divine Mother, and the fullness or integrality of surrender is possible only when the sadhaka detaches and knows himself as separate from the nature he surrenders. All offering implies previous possession of the thing offered, and possession argues some amount of control and transcendence. The initial liberation of the soul is, therefore, an important condition of the integral self-surrender. Most of the current spiritual disciplines stop at this initial liberation. When the soul can stand aloof from the whirl of Nature and unaffected by it; when it lives in an immortal infinity of consciousness—radiant, full of repose and tranquillity and impervious to any trouble or disturbances; when it finds in itself an inexhaustible fount of peace and serenity and bliss and has not to depend for them upon the fugitive touches of the world; when it is equal to all beings and neither attracted nor repelled by anything in the world; when it is free from the ego and does not identify itself with the mutable

<sup>1</sup> *The Synthesis of Yoga* by Sri Aurobindo.



formations of its nature;—it can be said to be liberated. This is the initial liberation. The sadhaka, in whom the soul-consciousness has been liberated, has then to promote the growth and ascent of his liberated consciousness towards the universality, transcendence and integrality of the divine Consciousness and offer his nature into the hands of the divine Mother, so that She can transform and perfect it for Her work in the world. His ascent from one status of the Spirit to another, from knowledge to higher knowledge, from power to fuller power, from bliss to deeper bliss, will be his further liberation into the universality and transcendence of the Divine. And the higher he ascends, the better can he unite his will with the Will of the Divine Mother for the liberation and transformation of his nature.

The main difficulty which, however, proves after a certain time to be a great help and opportunity is, that the sadhaka of the Integral Yoga is debarred by the very nature of his ideal to retreat into the inner quiescence of his being by a deliberate rejection or diminution of the works of his nature, as is done in most other yogas. He has to give battle to his enemies in the true Kshatriya spirit—challenge and face them when and where they are most alert and active. His dealings with them are guided by two very important truths of nature: first, that what binds by the agency of the ego and desire, becomes the most potent means of release in the conditions of desirelessness and unegoistic self-surrender; second, that most of the enemies of our nature are, in fact, our friends in disguise and have only to be won over and converted, and not to be stamped out of existence. They have not to be repressed or throttled, but held up before the Mother's Light and transmuted and converted into their divine counterparts. The very obstacles of the spiritual life are thus turned into so many helps by the spirit of self-consecration in the attitude of the sadhaka. The active life of dedicated service in which all the dynamic elements and energies of his being are given over into the hands of the Divine Mother becomes at once a means of his liberation and transformation. The path may be long—the transformation of every fibre and every faculty of our nature cannot certainly be done in a day—but each firm step taken in advance gives an increasing foretaste of freedom and a spur and speed to our progress.

The liberation of nature as distinct from the liberation of the Purusha essentially means liberation from the *dwandwas*, the dualities, and the working of the three *gunas*. But the dualities and the mixed working of the three *gunas* are not confined to our waking nature, they have their roots spreading down into the subconscious and inconscient layers of our being. A complete liberation of our nature from these basic impurities can be effected only by the process of a radical transformation, which we shall study in the next chapter. In the traditional yogas what is usually done is that the *sattwic* quality of the

nature is developed to a great extent, and whenever there is an uprush of rajas, tamas or the quality of inaction and inertia is resorted to; and preponderating sattwa with a modicum of tamas makes what is readily taken as a saintly nature. But in the Integral Yoga one does not seek to quell rajas by calling in the aid of tamas and taking refuge in a partial or complete inaction. One seeks, first, to transcend the gunas, to be trigunatita, and then transform them. All the parts, faculties and functions of the nature are given free play without any imposition of repressive inhibitions and taboos, so that whatever is obscure, crooked or perverse in them and resistant to the soul's divine flowering may be detected and offered up to the fire of the Mother's Force for a radical transmutation. No part is maimed or atrophied, for each is an indivisible portion of the whole organism and essential to the fullness of its perfection. A complete freedom from the dwandwas or dualities cannot be achieved on the basis of an imperfect sattwic equilibrium, for the three lower gunas are so inextricably involved in each other that none of them can exist singly without the others' harassing or hampering its action. Even in the most developed sattwic nature there is always the possibility of sporadic incursions of rajas or slow, insidious penetrations of tamas—there can neither be a perfect immunity nor a perfect equilibrium. The gunas are locked in a constant strife for mastery. It is a perception of this perpetual swing or unstable balancing of the struggling gunas that generates the impatient ascetic tendency towards the eternal immobility of moksha or the soul's liberation through the renunciation of Nature herself. But "the strife of the gunas is only a representation in the imperfection of the lower nature; what the three gunas stand for are three essential powers of the Divine which are not merely existent in a perfect equilibrium of quietude, but unified in a perfect consensus of divine action. Tamas in the spiritual being becomes a divine calm, which is not an inertia and incapacity of action, but a perfect power, shakti, holding in itself all its capacity and capable of controlling and subjecting to the law of calm even the most stupendous and enormous activity; rajas becomes a self-effecting initiating sheer Will of the Spirit, which is not desire, endeavour, striving passion, but the same perfect power of being, shakti, capable of an infinite, imperturbable and blissful action. Sattwa becomes not the modified mental light, prakash, but the self-existent light of the divine being, jyoti, which is the soul of the perfect power of being and illumines in their unity the divine quietude and the divine will of action. The ordinary liberation gets the still divine light in the divine quietude, but the integral perfection will aim at this greater triune unity."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *The Synthesis of Yoga* by Sri Aurobindo.

The philosophy underlying this aim and ideal of the triune unity and dynamic utilisation of the transformed gunas is that we have a dual being, one essential and the other derivative and instrumental. The instrumental being is called in Indian philosophy karana. It has two aspects: inner and outer, antahkarana and bahihkarana, subjective and objective. The word karana or instrument indicates that it has a purpose to serve. What is the purpose behind the creation of this instrumental being? What should man do with his nature of the three gunas? Should he condemn his instrument to atrophy and futility? Or use it only to reduce it to immobility and have done with it for ever? Or should he employ it only to extricate his essential being from it and prove by this release the utter senselessness of its creation? These are no solutions of the problem of its use, but a clumsy escape and evasion from it. The Upanishads declare that all that is there above is also here below, and that all that is here is also there. This is a definite affirmation of the truth, the right use and utility, the teleological purpose of all that constitutes our essential and instrumental being. An instrument has been created not for the purpose of condemning and scrapping it, but for serving some definite end. It is fatuous to call a thing an instrument and deny its utility in the same breath. If our nature, subjective and objective, is an instrument, what is its destined use and how best can it be served? Sri Aurobindo looks the problem squarely in the face and asserts with the Vedic Rishis that the instrument has not only a use, but a divine use—it is created for the progressive expression or manifestation of the Divine. Evidently, then, a fettered instrument, fettered with its limited and defective qualities, cannot fulfil the purpose for which it is made. It has to be purified, transfigured and liberated into its divine principle. Its play of the lower qualities is a legacy of its inconscient origin, a result of its creation in the Ignorance; but the march of evolution shows that the instrument goes on refining itself and becoming more and more conscious and efficient as our essential being awakes to its inherent divinity and mastery. The liberation of our essential being is the most important condition of the liberation of our instrumental being, unless, of course, we choose to shuffle off the latter altogether and say to the Divine, "We renounce the instrument you have given us, because we find it intrinsically impure and imperfect, and we retire into our essential Self. We do not care what happens to your Will and purpose in the world." This exclusive tension towards personal salvation, this intense, intolerant, passionate thirst for individual release by the rejection of nature, mumukshutwa, we have to renounce, and renounce utterly, if we aspire to realise the integral liberation in the Divine and fulfil His Will and purpose in the world. We have to become bhogamokshanirakankshi, desirous neither of bhoga nor of moksha, but totally consecrated to the supreme Reality and His omnipotent Will. When our nature is

## THE INTEGRAL YOGA OF SRI AUROBINDO

liberated, there will be no longer any possibility of obscurity, neither in our soul nor in our phenomenal parts, from any cause whatever—our entire being will be in the Being of the Divine, and moved by it. Our liberated nature, transformed in its parts and energies, will attain its perfection when the supramental Will initiates and accomplishes all its movements. The distinction of birth and death will then disappear for ever in the termless bliss of immortality—immortality in the soul and immortality in the nature. Our union with the Supreme will be at once sayujya and sadharma, identity in being and a dynamic identity in nature—

“Light and might and bliss and immortal wisdom  
Clasping for ever.”<sup>1</sup>

RISHABHCHAND

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### LET THY SMILE...

Let thy smile disperse all shadow-veils  
And release the mellow gold thy glory trails;  
Lay thy touch and let long winters melt away,  
Glad and free we sing to spring's magic sway.

Inscribe thy name in the alphabets of stars  
Upon my soul that no horizon bars;  
Let aloof immensity ever extend  
And grow a wonder-dawn and earthward bend.

Let thy flute strike the notes that marvels own,  
Reveal splendours supreme yet to man unknown;  
Fill the void in my sky with joy divine,  
Morn thousand-sunned in our nights glow and shine.

ROBI GUPTA

<sup>1</sup> *Collected Poems and Plays of Sri Aurobindo.*

## SRI AUROBINDO'S INTERPRETATION OF THE GITA

*(Continued from the May issue)*

THE remaining six chapters restate the teaching already imparted but throw a fuller light on it. We shall go over them very briefly, as Sri Aurobindo's exposition of the various aspects of the philosophy of the Gita has already been put before the reader.

In the next four essays, Chapters XIII, XIV and XV of the Gita have been considered. The titles of these essays give an indication of the subject matter of the three chapters. The Field and its Knower, Above the Gunas, the Three Purushas, The Fullness of Spiritual Action. In these essays the previous relations between the three Purushas and the Prakriti with her three Gunas have been brought out more definitely than before. Arjuna puts a question asking for a clearer elucidation of these still ill-lighted matters. He wants to know of the Purusha and the Prakriti, of the field of being and the knower of the field, of knowledge and the object of knowledge. The Gita's ideas in their essence, bearing on these matters, have already been set forth to some extent. All life, all works, says the Master, are a transaction between the soul and Nature. We have to see what this transaction becomes when the individual has risen to a state of spiritual liberation, to what perfection does it lead the soul? These questions are answered by the Gita on the basis of a broad synthesis of the Sankhya, Vedanta and Yoga systems of thought.

The embodied soul has a triple aspect of its own self-experience. First as an ego, a spiritual being apparently subject to the ignorance of the lower Nature. Second as the immutable Self behind the outward manifestation. Third as the eternal Truth transcending the opposition of the first two. The reader will recognise the Kshara, Akshara and Uttama Purushas already referred to several times. Nature too is twofold, the Para and the Apra Prakritis. The latter is the lower—the outward and mechanical Nature, subject to three Gunas. The former is the higher, the divine and spiritual Nature, in which the soul is consciously one with the Supreme. The complete spiritual liberation that we seek is attainable by passing from the lower to the higher Nature and then by the latter to the Eternal through divine knowledge, works and love. All these points we have gone over already. They receive a fuller treatment in the concluding portion but, says Sri Aurobindo, "it is the last thought with which it closes that is

of supreme interest, for in it we shall find the central idea of its teaching, its great word to the soul of man, its highest message."

The expression, the Field and its Knower, appears first in chapter XIII. This body, which is the field of the spirit, is called Kshetra, and in this field there is someone who is called the Kshetrajna—one who takes cognisance of the field. The field includes not only the physical body but, Sri Aurobindo explains, "all too that the body supports, the working of nature, the mentality, the natural action of the objectivity and subjectivity of our being." But even this is only the individual field; there is a universal field, a macrocosm, of the same knower. By the Kshetra is meant the whole working of the lower Prakṛiti. Dualities like pleasure and pain, liking and disliking constitute the character of our first transactions with the world of Nature. But there is something beyond which Arjuna seeks to know when he asks Krishna to elucidate the true knowledge and the something beyond that has to be known,—“the true knowledge of the field no less than of the knower.” This is real wisdom and to acquire it one must turn inward. As the Master puts it, “One Brahman, one reality in Self and Nature is the object of all knowledge.” In the following lines, Sri Aurobindo gives a clear image of the soul bound to the ignorance of the lower Prakṛiti, “The soul when it allows itself to be tyrannised over by the appearances of Nature misses itself and goes whirling about in the cycle of the births and deaths of its bodies. There passionately following without end the mutations of personality and its interests, it cannot draw back to the possession of its impersonal and unborn self-existence.” Yet this is what the soul has got to do! It must find itself. “To enjoy the eternity to which birth and life are only outward circumstances, is the soul’s true immortality.” That Eternity is the Brahman. And the Soul and Nature are two aspects of this eternal principle. It has assumed these two forms for its universal Lila. It is definitely and clearly laid down in this chapter that both the Puruṣha and the Prakṛiti are without origin and without end. The distinctions between the two are rapidly drawn by a few decisive epithets and their powers and functions characterised pointedly, the difference between the embodied soul entangled in the coils of the lower Prakṛiti with its three Guṇas and the liberated soul which has risen above the three guṇas, which has put on the divine nature, *Sādharmya*. Sri Aurobindo says, “This supreme importance assigned to *Sādharmya* is a capital point in the teaching of the Ġita.”

Immortality in the sense of the personal survival after the death of the body was never held to be true immortality either by the Vedānta or by the Ġita. As Sri Aurobindo notes, “All beings are immortal in that sense and it is only the forms that perish.” Dissolution of the manifest form overtakes worlds as well as individuals. The Ġita says—*Pralayam Yāti dehabhvit*—

the being bearing the body is liable to be disintegrated. The soul itself persists and after an interval assumes a new body and the cycle continues. To be immortal in the deeper sense is something different from the survival of death and this constant recurrence. Immortality is that supreme status in which the Spirit knows itself to be superior to death and birth, not conditioned by the nature of its manifestation, infinite, imperishable, immutably eternal,—immortal because never being born, it never dies. But to arrive at the truly immortal state, the individual soul must free itself from the burden of the *gunas*, it must grow into the likeness of the Divine—*Sādharmya*. This great thing we can do, says the Master, only by an effort of Godward knowledge, will and adoration. The knowledge on which so much stress was laid in the ancient scriptures is not, “an intellectual cognizance of things, but a growing of man the mental being into a greater spiritual consciousness.” It is a new spiritual outlook on life and things and beings, a God-knowledge. It is this knowledge that leads to the *parā siddhi* or highest spiritual status held forth in chapter XIV. It is the same as *sādharmya* and *nistraigunya* mentioned already and brings to the Yogi true immortality described in the book. But this state would be impossible to attain if the soul of man were not in its essence ever one with the Divine. Man does not belong to the lower Nature, he has descended into it from the height of the Supreme Spiritual Nature. The Gita makes this perfectly clear.

The Eternal puts forth the cosmic movement out of himself—“he is at once the Father and Mother of the universe; the substance of the infinite idea, *Vijnāna*, the Mahat Brahman is the womb into which he casts the seed of his self-conception.... He receives into this (*Virāt*) Vast of self-conception and develops there the divine embryo into mental and physical form of existence born from the original act of conceptive creation. All we see springs from that act of creation; but that which is born here is only finite idea and form of the unborn and infinite”. The Spirit is eternal; so is the Nature; the Soul which takes on this or that form is equally eternal. What is it then that brings about the subjection of the soul to the apparent bondage of birth and death? For, the bondage is apparent without any doubt. Sri Aurobindo gives this reply, “It is a subordinate act or state of consciousness, it is a self-oblivious identification with the modes of Nature in the limited workings of this lower motivity and with this self-wrapped ego-bounded knot of action of the mind, life and body.” To rise above the modes of Prakṛiti is indispensable for the aspirant who seeks to become one in consciousness with the Supreme.

The three *guṇas*—Sattwa, Rajas and Tamas—are described in the Gita only by their psychological action in man or incidentally in things like food which produce an effect on man’s mind and life. But a more general definition

is indicated in the conception of the Hindu trinity which ascribes a particular guna to each member thereof—Sattwa to Vishnu the Preserver, Rajas to Brahma the Creator and Tamas to Rudra the Destroyer. Sri Aurobindo says, "Looking behind this idea for the rationale of the triple ascription we might divide the three modes or qualities in terms of the motion of the universal energy as Nature's three concomitant and inseparable powers of equilibrium, kinesis and inertia." The corresponding psychological powers may be described thus—Tamas as power of Nescience, Rajas as Nature's Power of the active seeking of light by desire and Sattwa as her power of possessing and harmonising knowledge. In the world the three modes of nature are intertwined. There is, says Sri Aurobindo "the appearance of a world governed by the interlocked and mutually limited play of the three qualitative modes of nature." The Gita gives definitions of the three *gunas*. Sattwa, it tells us, "is by the purity of its quality a cause of light and illumination". Rajas again, we are told, "is a child of the attachment of the soul to the desire of objects; it is born from the nature's thirst for an unpossessed satisfaction". It can be described as a craving and a longing. Tamas is born of inertia and ignorance and its fruit too is inertia and ignorance. It is the darkness of Tamas which obscures the light of Sattwa. Darkness or Tamasic *aprākasha* is the opposite of Sattwic illumination or *prakāsha*. As a force of inertia Tamas is the opposite of Rajasic kinesis. All three modes are together present in every human being. No man is purely Sattwic or Rajasic or Tamasic. The three qualities are always there and active in everyone. Now one preponderates, now another; each subjects the man to its own peculiar action. When one mode, say Sattwic, generally and ordinarily predominates in any man, we call him a Sattwic personality—and so on, with the other two modes.

The triple power is, however, a triple bondage. Even Sattwa can become a chain. It is attachment that constitutes the bondage. Says the Gita, "Sattwa binds by attachment to knowledge and attachment to happiness, Rajas binds the embodied spirit by attachment to works, Tamas binds by negligence and indolence and sleep." The soul has to rise above the attraction of all the three *gunas*, before it can liberate itself. But does this liberation mean cessation of all doing? Certainly not, according to the Gita; for it insists on the need of action along with freedom from attachment. The true solution of this apparent riddle is provided by the scripture—To give up the action itself to the Lord of works and be only a desireless and equal-minded instrument of his will. On being asked by his disciple, Krishna describes the sign of the liberated man as the equality of the soul in the Brahmic Status.

This leads us to a detailed consideration of the three Purushas in the fifteenth essay of Sri Aurobindo. Kshara and Akshara are defined in the Gita



—Kshara is the action of unliberated mutable Nature and Akshara is the immutable Self who watches that Nature. Dissolution into the Akshara Brahman is not put before us by the Gita as the highest aim of Yoga, for it reverts constantly to this note, "He who loves and strives after Me with an undeviating love and adoration, passes beyond the three gunas and he too is prepared for becoming the Brahman." This "Me" is, as we have seen before, the foundation of the silent Brahman and is above the immutability of the Akshara—a haven of absolute Ananda "untouched by rajasic suffering and beyond sattwic happiness". To rise into that bliss, the crown of bhakti, must be, says Sri Aurobindo, "the completion of spiritual perfection and the fulfilment of the eternal immortalising dharma." The goal of the Gita's Yoga is the realization that Vasudeva is everything—*Vasudevah Sarvamiti*. He, Purushottama, is at the back of all that is divided and mutable as well as of all that is undivided and immutable. Without this knowledge, no liberation is possible for the individual. But He is neither the mutable nor the immutable exclusively. The apparent contradiction between the two baffles our mental understanding. But Krishna wants his disciple to know him in his entirety. "I shall tell you how you can do it," he says and proceeds to describe the method to Arjuna.

The Gita gives its own interpretation of Maya. It is not the all-powerful Illusion of the orthodox Monist, but a partial consciousness which one must transcend in order to know Brahman wholly—*samagram mām*. It is in the conception of the Purushottama that the Gita finds the principle of oneness exemplified—"He who having entered the three worlds upholds them." "As I transcend the mutable and stand higher than the immutable, I am well-known in the Veda and in the world as the Uttama Purusha. He who knows me thus as the Supreme Purusha adores Me in every way". All this we find in the chapter of the Gita, but the Key-word of reconciliation of the two conceptions of Kshara and Akshara is contained in the verse, "But other than these two is that highest spirit called the Supreme Self, who enters the three worlds and up-bears them; the imperishable Lord."

The idea of the Supreme self has been referred to all along from the beginning, but it is only now that it has been expressly described and given a name. "The mystery of the Supreme Person," says the Master, "is the secret of love and devotion." It is this intimate personal contact with the Divine, this sweet bond of bhakti, which is reconciled with both knowledge and works in the great synthesis of the Gita. "The spiritual person, the eternal soul in us offers itself and all it has and is to the eternal Divine, the Supreme Person and Godhead of whom it is a portion," says Sri Aurobindo. Knowledge and Works are completed and fulfilled in this self-offering. The Kshara is the Purushottama in his eternal multiplicity. Krishna says in the Gita, "It is an

eternal portion of Me that becomes the Jiva or creature in a world of Jivas." Without this, the maintenance of cosmic existence and the dire struggle on the field of Kurukshetra would become meaningless and dissolution in the Akshara would be the end of life.

In this chapter the old comparison of the Ashwattha tree with worldly life is brought in—a tree without beginning and without end in time and space. Its original source is above, but it extends its other roots (roots of desire and attachment) into the world and men. The hymns of the Veda are likened to the leaves of the tree. Sri Aurobindo makes the meaning clear thus, "The branches of this cosmic tree extend both below and above, below in the material, above in the supraphysical planes; they grow by the gunas of Nature, for the triple guna is all the subject of the Vedas. The Vedic rhythms are the leaves and the sensible objects of desire supremely gained by a right doing of sacrifice are the constant budding of the foliage."

In order to get back to his supreme eternal status, man has to free himself from the toils of the modes of the lower Prakriti and follow the path of Nivritti—cessation from the original urge to action, Pravritti. But this is not an easy path to pursue. To do it man must, in the figurative language of the text, cut the long fixed roots of desire by the strong sword of detachment. The path takes him to the presence of the eternal Purusha—not of the immutable Akshara Purusha, but of him who is both Kshara and Akshara, who is both the manifest and the unmanifest, both the One and the Many. The Divine is neither wholly the Kshara, nor wholly the Akshara—he is greater than the immutable Self and he is much greater than the soul of mutable things—if he is capable of being both at once it is because he is other than they. And whoever knows the Supreme Person to be this surpasses the opposite of the mutable and the immutable; he becomes *Sarva-vid*, whole-knowing. Sri Aurobindo describes the *Sarva-vid* thus, "Divine in the equality of his imperturbable self-existence, one in it with all objects and creatures, he brings that boundless equality, that deep oneness down into his mind and heart and life and body and founds on it in an indivisible integrality the trinity of divine love, divine works and divine knowledge. This is the Gita's way of Salvation." The utmost monism, the most secret *shāstra*, that Krishna teaches to Arjuna sees the one as the one even in the multiplicities of Nature, as much in the individual and the cosmic as in the Reality of the Supracosmic.

(To be continued)

C. C. DUTT

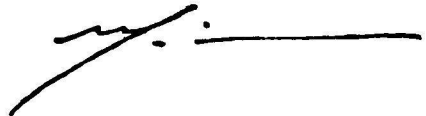
## WORK AND THE SADHAKS

I do not give positions to the sadhaks—I give them work; and to all I give an equal opportunity. It is those who prove to be most capable and most sincere, honest and faithful that have the biggest amount of work and the greatest responsibility.

Whatever the external circumstances, they are, without exception, the objective projection of what is inside yourself. When in your work you find something giving trouble outside, look within and you will find in yourself the corresponding difficulty.

Change yourself and the circumstances will change.

26-6-1954.

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a series of connected, fluid strokes that form a name, possibly 'Sri Aurobindo'.

## TO THE EMPLOYEES OF SRI AUROBINDO ASHRAM

What I wish to do for you.

I shall tell you how I view the solution of your problems both individual and collective, and what is the truth of the relation between us.

But for the working out of the programme I am going to place before you, two essential conditions are necessary. First, I must have the financial means to execute my plan; secondly, you must show a minimum of sincerity, honesty and good will in your attitude towards me and towards your work. You have most unfortunately the habit of trying to deceive me. Bad advisers have taught you that that is the best thing to do in your relation with your employer. It may be, when the employer seeks to deceive you and exploit you, this attitude on your part is legitimate. But in regard to me it is a foolishness and a blunder; first of all, because you cannot deceive me and your deceit becomes immediately obvious and takes away from me all desire to come to your help, and secondly because I am not a "boss" and I do not seek to exploit you.

All my effort is towards realising in the world as much truth as actual circumstances will allow. With the increase of truth, the welfare and happiness of all will necessarily increase.

Differences of caste and class have no truth for me, all that counts is individual value. My aim is to create a big family in which it will be possible for every one to fully develop his capacities and express them. Every one will have his place and occupation in accordance with his capacities and in a relation of good will and brotherhood.

As a consequence of such a family organisation there will be no need of remuneration or wages. Work will not be a means of earning livelihood: its purpose is twofold, first to develop one's nature and capacity for action and secondly, in proportion to his physical means and moral and intellectual aptitude, to give his service to the family to which he belongs, to whose welfare it is but proper to contribute as it is also proper for the family to provide for the real needs of each one of its members.

To give a concrete form to this ideal under the present conditions of life, my idea is to build a kind of city accommodating at the outset about 2000 persons. It will be built according to the most modern plans, meeting all up-to-date requirements of hygiene and public health. It will have not only dwelling houses, but also gardens and sport grounds for physical culture. Each family

will be lodged in a separate house, bachelors will be grouped according to their occupations and affinities.

Nothing necessary for life will be forgotten. Kitchens equipped in the most modern hygienic way will supply equally to all a simple and healthy food, securing the energy necessary for the proper maintenance of the body. They will be worked on a cooperative basis of common labour and collaboration.

In the matter of education, whatever is necessary for literacy, for moral and intellectual development will be arranged for all, children or adults: various schools, technical instruction in different vocations, classes for music and dance, Cinema Hall where educational films will be shown, Lecture Hall, Library, Reading Room, varieties of physical exercises, Playground and so on.

Everyone can choose the kind of activity that is most suitable to his nature and will receive the required training. Even small gardens will be provided where those who like cultivation can grow flowers, fruits and vegetables.

In the matter of health, there will be regular medical visits, a hospital, a dispensary, a nursing home for the segregation of contagious cases. A department of hygiene will have the exclusive function of inspecting all public and private buildings to see that the most rigorous rules of cleanliness are observed everywhere and by all. As natural adjuncts to this department public baths and a common laundry will be put at the disposal of everyone.

Finally, big stores will be set up where one can find all the small *extras* which give life variety and pleasantness and which one will get against a "coupon" that will be given as a gratuity for special proficiency in work or conduct.

I shall not give a long description of the organisation and the working of the institution although everything in it to the smallest detail has already been foreseen.

It goes without saying that for admission to live in this ideal place the conditions that need to be fulfilled are good character, good conduct, honest, regular and efficient work and a general good will.

10-7-54



# *Students' Section*

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## THE MOTHER'S TALKS

(TO THE CHILDREN OF THE ASHRAM)

*Why am I unable to meditate?*

Because you have not learnt it. A sudden fancy seizes you and you say, "Now I will sit down and meditate". But to sit down cross-legged, cross-armed, eyes closed is not doing meditation. You have to learn how to meditate, even as you learn to do mathematics or play on the piano. There are regular courses of meditation given by all teachers in all ages and countries. There are so many rules and regulations. There are all kinds of instructions, such as, to keep the mind quiet, to be silent and not to think, to gather all your thoughts and concentrate them etc., etc. You have been taught how to sit, stand, walk, eat: you do not remember the method and the discipline, because you did that when you were very young. In the same way if you were taught how to meditate in your childhood, you would not find it difficult to do today. Unfortunately you were not taught. You are not taught things of that kind. You are not taught even how to sleep. You think that to go to bed and lie down anyway is the way to sleep. Not at all. You are to learn to sleep exactly in the same way as you learn how to walk or eat. You do not learn so many things, you are not taught. As you grow in years, slowly, laboriously through unpleasant experiences, through suffering and blundering, in the end you come to know of certain fundamental things. And when you are old, and your hairs are grey, you see you are beginning to learn something, when, that is to say, it is too late. Instead of that, if your parents, the people who looked after you took the trouble of teaching you what you have to do, to do it well—to act well, to think well, to feel well, in the correct manner—then you could avoid all the blunders you have been making all your life. You are surprised when you fall ill, when you feel tired and exhausted. For you know nothing. It requires years to learn something, to learn even the most elementary things such as to be clean.

To live as one should, in the right way, is a very difficult art. It requires study, it requires practice. Try simply to keep the body healthy, the mind quiet, and the heart full of good will—these are some of the indispensable elements for the basis of decent living; you will see the thing is not easy.

*Is some kind of work necessary for us to do, apart from our study?*

That depends upon you, upon your aim. If you wish to do sadhana, you should naturally give at least some time to a work that is not selfish, that is, not done for the sake of yourself.\* Study is very good, very necessary, even indispensable; precisely because it is just one of the things I referred to a little while ago, which you should learn when you are young, it becomes difficult when you are grown up. There may come, of course, an age when you have done the basic studies and when you have the urge to do sadhana. Then you must take up something which is not exclusively personal. You must do something disinterested, not concerned with yourself. If you are concerned with yourself only, you shut yourself within a kind of shell and you are not open to the universal forces. An unselfish movement, an unselfish action, however small, opens the door to something other than your little self. Normally you are imprisoned in your shell and you know of the existence of other similar shells only when you knock against them. But to be aware of the one Force that pervades all, of the mutual dependence of things and beings is quite another matter: it is the indispensable basis for Sadhana.

*But cannot one study for the sake of the Divine, to prepare oneself for the divine work?*

One can. But that requires quite a different attitude. You have to study in altogether another spirit. First of all, there would be no subject that pleases you, none that displeases you, neither a class that bores you, nor one that amuses you. There would be no difficult lessons nor easy lessons, neither would there be a teacher who is unpleasant nor another who is pleasant. All such likes and dislikes, prejudices and preferences disappear. You are in a condition when you begin to learn from everything that you meet with, everything is an occasion for an experience, a knowledge: everything prepares you for the divine work, everything is interesting. If you study in that spirit, it is quite all right.

*How is it that so much money is allowed to be wasted here? People entrusted with a work seem to spend lavishly according to their fancy!*

Money is not the only thing that is wasted. The Energy, the Consciousness is wasted a thousand times more, infinitely more than money. There is

## THE MOTHER'S TALKS

not a second when there is no wastage, sometimes worse things are there. There is a habit, I hope it is unconscious, to take in as much energy, as much consciousness as one is capable of and then use it for one's personal satisfaction. It is a thing happening every minute. If all this energy, all this consciousness that is being ceaselessly poured upon you all were used for the right purpose, that is to say, for the divine work, for preparing the divine work, we would have gone by now far on the road, much farther than where we are at present. But unfortunately everyone, if not consciously, at least instinctively, absorbs as much as possible this divine gift and misuses it for selfish ends.

Who thinks of it?—that this Force is there which is infinitely greater, infinitely more precious than all money power, this force is there and is being given consciously, constantly, with an endless patience and perseverance with a single end in view, that of accomplishing the divine work—I say, who thinks of not wasting it? Who recollects that it is a sacred duty for all to progress, to prepare themselves so that they may understand better, and live better? It is because you live by the divine energy and the divine consciousness that you are able to live upon them, spend them for your own self's sake. People are shocked when they see a few thousand rupees wasted, but they do not notice that a whole flood of consciousness and knowledge is being turned aside from its true direction.

If one wants to do a divine work upon earth, one must come there with tons of patience and endurance, one must be able to live in eternity and wait till consciousness awakes in every one, the consciousness of true honesty.

2-6-1954

NOLINI KANTA GUPTA



## MY BOYHOOD UNDER SRI AUROBINDO

*(Continued from the previous issue)*

### (I) THE VITAL AND ITS NATURE

SELF: Does the emotional being act generally through the vital?

SRI AUROBINDO: The emotional being is itself a part of the vital.

(7-8-1933)

SELF: Yesterday X was explaining to me Antony's oration over the dead body of Caesar. I felt in such sympathy with Antony and such pity for Caesar that tears began to roll from my eyes. How did this emotional outburst happen even though the separative consciousness felt the movement to be stupid?

SRI AUROBINDO: It is the sentimental part of the vital identifying itself with imaginary sorrow.

(2-12-1933)

SELF: Why does this part of the vital identify itself with sorrow or joy so quickly and deeply as to weep like that?

SRI AUROBINDO: It is its nature and habit to take delight in joy and suffering.

(4-12-1933)

SELF: We find many people—even those not leading the spiritual life—who would not feel anything if they read of such things or actually saw them.

SRI AUROBINDO: That depends on whether a man's vital is hard or sentimental or governed by his reason etc.

(7-12-1933)

SELF: The people who do not feel sorrow or joy have their sentimental feelings dried up, I suppose.

SRI AUROBINDO: It is not a question of feeling sorrow or joy or any other emotion, everybody does that who has not overcome the ordinary Nature. That is not sentimental but emotional. Sentimentalism comes in when you take pleasure either in indulging or in displaying the feeling or when you have them for no reason or without sufficient reason.

(8-12-1933)

SELF: Is the Divine Ananda the same as "joy"?

SRI AUROBINDO: No. Joy is a vital feeling, like its opposite, sorrow.

(30-7-1933)

MY BOYHOOD UNDER SRI AUROBINDO

SELF: When one breaks or does not consciously obey the rule or law of the Guru one feels depressed. Is it not a proper reaction?

SRI AUROBINDO: Not depression, but a stronger aspiration. (17-6-1933)

SELF: Does one feel sorrow only in the vital?

SRI AUROBINDO: No—but sorrow is mainly vital. (31-7-1933)

SELF: Why is the vital depression condemned so much? What is its effect?

SRI AUROBINDO: All depression is bad as it lowers the consciousness, spends the energy, opens to adverse forces. (31-7-1933)

SELF: When the Divine works directly on a man who is not conscious, will it have any result?

SRI AUROBINDO: Yes, but not so quickly as on one who is conscious. (4-9-1933)

SELF: Could this feeling be correct that even my vital wants me to do nothing against the Mother's will?

SRI AUROBINDO: If that were so, transformation would be easy. It would mean that nothing would want to go its own way and so nothing would happen in you except what was in conformity with the Mother's will. You mean that the conscious part of the vital does not want to do anything contrary to the Mother's will—but that is a different thing. (25-7-1933)

SELF: How is one to establish a homogeneity in the vital?

SRI AUROBINDO: Reject all disturbances and call in more and more peace and equality from above into the vital. (29-5-33)

SELF: What are the nervous energies?

SRI AUROBINDO: Energies of the vital physical consciousness. (4-12-1933)

SELF: The reason why I asked you the other day about the vital was this: my mind was under the vital control and the body was full of tamas.

SRI AUROBINDO: If the body was full of tamas, it was not under the vital control—the tamas is in the physical itself, while the vital is rajasic; when it does not want to support the action, then there is tamas. (25-6-1933)

SELF: At times, why does the vital not support a physical action and give a chance to the body to throw off its tamas?

SRI AUROBINDO: For various reasons. Sometimes the vital is dissatisfied, sometimes revolted, sometimes simply not interested. (29-6-1933)

SELF: Could I be enlightened how to make my vital and physical conscious of the truth and reject the falsehood? They seem to be dormant and occupied with only the ordinary human nature.

SRI AUROBINDO: How dormant?...“Dormant” means “not in action” ....The vital, and the physical mind have been very active. A pressure has to be put on them constantly to change till they do change. (23-7-1933)

SELF: Our physical has to depend on the vital's help for action. Will it have always to do so—even in its true nature?

SRI AUROBINDO: Yes. The spirit itself if it wants to manifest in matter must use the vital. It is so that things are arranged. (22-10-1933)

SELF: From where do all sorts of small suggestions come, which feed one's sense of sex as well as egoistic vanity such as “this or that person is looking at you”?

SRI AUROBINDO: From the physical mind plane influenced by the lower vital. (30-12-1933)

SELF: Is it true that when one becomes very angry, one's subtle physical becomes hot?

SRI AUROBINDO: Anger creates a heat in the body due to excitement. (7-12-1933)

SELF: Once when I asked you if an old desire was again rising up in me owing to a previous insufficient rejection, you said that it had remained in the physical vital. What does the “physical vital” mean?

SRI AUROBINDO: I think I said it was left in the subconscious part of the physical vital. As there is a physical mind, so there is a physical vital—a vital turned entirely upon physical things, full of desires and greeds and seekings for pleasure on the physical plane. (22-9-1933)

SELF: Has the vital any connection with the play of sex?

SRI AUROBINDO: Of course, it is the vital that gives it its intensity and power to hold the consciousness. (16-11-1933)

SELF: Why does man incline so much to “money”?

SRI AUROBINDO: Because it is a dynamic token of wealth and can be used to satisfy his desires. (7-10-1933)

SELF: I see that every evening some being throws false suggestions upon me, saying, the Divine does not like you. Lately their force of insistence has

MY BOYHOOD UNDER SRI AUROBINDO

increased. I try my best to reject them but without any success. May the Mother prevent this being from approaching me ever!

What is that being? From some vital world?

SRI AUROBINDO: Yes, it is a being of falsehood from the vital world which tries to make one take its false suggestions for the truth and disturb the consciousness, and get it to leave the straight path and either get depressed or turned against the Mother. If you reject and refuse to listen or believe always, it will disappear. (30-3-1933)

SELF: Do the beings of the vital world have shape and mould (subtle, of course) just as human beings have?

SRI AUROBINDO: Yes—but they can change their shapes at will. (6-9-1933.)

SELF: Is each person surrounded by a particular number of vital beings or are there different vital beings entangling him at each attack?

SRI AUROBINDO: There is no particular number—but sometimes there are particular vital beings that attach themselves to a man if he accepts them. (8-9-1933)

SELF: It is said that if one dies with desires, hopes etc., one becomes a demon and torments people. Is it really so?

SRI AUROBINDO: In that case everybody who dies would become a demon and torment people—except a few yogis and sanyasins. (9-9-1933)

SELF: In what world do such spirits remain? The vital?

SRI AUROBINDO: Those who become Bhutas? In the vital physical. (9-9-1933)

SELF: Are not the Gods of the vital world indulging in their own powers, and with a view to reign on the earth? Are they not individualised?

SRI AUROBINDO: Some are—but often the Forces play of themselves. I suppose by the Gods you mean the vital beings. But they are not gods—they are Asuras, Rakshasas or other undivine Powers. (9-11-1933)

SELF: What is the difference between Forces and beings? Have not the Forces forms like beings?

SRI AUROBINDO: No. Forces are forces, they come in streams or waves or vibrations. (13-11-1933)

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MOTHER INDIA

(2) THE PHYSICAL: ITS QUALITIES AND STATES

SELF: Can I not command my body to cut down its sleep to two or three hours only? I have heard that many Yogis are able to minimise their sleep.

SRI AUROBINDO: It is not possible to do at once what you like with the body. If the body is told to sleep only 2 or 3 hours, it may follow if the will is strong enough—but afterwards it may get exceedingly strained and even break down for want of needed rest. The yogis who minimise their sleep succeed only after a long tapasya in which they learn how to control the forces of Nature governing the body. (25-6-33)

SELF: When and how is one to get out of one's limited physical personality?

SRI AUROBINDO: The question "when" has no meaning. Getting out means the consciousness widening so that one does not feel oneself any longer as shut up in the body or identified with the body and with the ordinary personality. (27-3-33)

SELF: Yesterday, while working with an inner meditation I fell down from the stool on which I was standing. How does such an accident happen?

SRI AUROBINDO: Some unconsciousness in the body taken advantage of by small forces which enjoy these accidents. (10-6-33)

They act at all times when they see anything in the mind, vital or body off its guard. (11-6-33)

SELF: How does the unconsciousness get into the body?

SRI AUROBINDO: The body is mostly unconscious or rather subconscious—it has to be made conscious. (10-6-33)

SELF: How is one to make it conscious?

SRI AUROBINDO: By bringing down the true consciousness into it and by being quiet, vigilant and conscious in the mind and vital. (11-6-33)

SELF: I fail to account for the thrice repeated accident of dropping the varnish out of the tin while working.

SRI AUROBINDO: Something in your physical must have been unconscious or off guard and been given a push or wrong movement. (12-7-33)

SELF: During the whole day I have been so much filled with tamas that I have not even succeeded in calling for the Divine's help. What to do under such circumstances?

SRI AUROBINDO: You have either to shake it off by will or to call down the force into it. (23-6-33)

SELF: Today during my painting work I did not like to do the polishing

work and left it for the workers to do it for me.

SRI AUROBINDO: It was a vital preference or tamasic unwillingness.  
(23-6-33)

SELF: Is it not true that tamas turns into Peace, if one turns in one's nature to the Divine and aspires for the Divine?

SRI AUROBINDO: Tamas cannot of itself turn into Peace. One has to bring down Peace from above.  
(30-7-33)

SELF: If, when the Peace comes down, one is not ready to absorb it, does the being's inertia turn that too into inertia? I am asking because the Peace can easily be converted into such a quality.

SRI AUROBINDO: The Peace is not of the nature of inertia, but the inertia of tamas is a degradation of peace or rest as rajas is a degradation of divine Force. So when the physical is invited to peace and cannot receive it, it brings up inertia instead.  
(10-11-33)

SELF: This evening, no sooner did I come out of the Reception Room than the back began to ache. There was absolutely nothing before. How did the ache come so suddenly?

SRI AUROBINDO: There are movements of forces of which the body becomes conscious.  
(28-11-33)

SELF: Sometimes when one is working, although one likes to work and the body goes on acting, the mind seems tamasic and hinders one from living in the Mother and feeling her force. If there is tamas, does it still allow one to work as usual?

SRI AUROBINDO: Yes, in this case it is not a tamas of the vital, but a tamas of the mental physical which remains inert and passive.  
(4-12-33)

SELF: Does the mental tamas remain till one realises the supermind?

SRI AUROBINDO: No. The mental tamas need not remain—the physical can only disappear altogether by the supramental descent.  
(12-12-33)

SELF: What would be the activity of the transformed mechanical mind?

SRI AUROBINDO: It would be no longer mechanical, but a basis of permanent illumination in the body consciousness.  
(16-11-33)

SELF: It is noticed that a good concentrated state comes, but goes away automatically. Why do I thus lose the Mother's touch?

SRI AUROBINDO: It happens so with everybody. The consciousness of the physical body cannot remain concentrated all the time.  
(2-9-33)

SELF: How to make that touch constant?

SRI AUROBINDO: By going in the higher consciousness it will come. (2-9-33)

## MOTHER INDIA

SELF: Some friend said, "One feels the inner touch gone because one may not be quite ready to retain the Divine pressure. Probably it might be the Divine Himself who takes it away, for our physical body may get fatigued by the constant working." Is this a fact?

SRI AUROBINDO: Yes, the ordinary physical consciousness is not able to hold the contact and it does get tired—also it cannot assimilate much at a time. But it is not always the Divine who takes away the pressure; the lower consciousness itself loses it or gives it up. (2-9-33)

SELF: Why is the physical mind so much open to the vital suggestions and forces?

SRI AUROBINDO: The physical depends on the vital, at every step—it could not do anything without the help of the vital—so it is quite natural that it should receive its suggestions. (1-9-33)

SELF: If our vital is a projection from the vital world itself, why does it feel everything new and strange when it enters there during night?

SRI AUROBINDO: The vital does not feel anything strange there. It is the physical consciousness that feels strange when it gets the transcript of the experience. (28-10-33)

SELF: If the psychic loses its grip over the body even for a second, the body would simply be lifeless. Is that not so?

SRI AUROBINDO: That happens when the psychic leaves the body and abandons it—it is what is called death. (27-7-33)

SELF: The doctor has advised me to take milk only and to lie down. Is that all right? And should I attend my work or not? Please tell me without depending on what I think.

SRI AUROBINDO: A straight answer cannot be given because much depends upon your mind. It is doubtful whether an exclusive milk diet and complete inertia will be good for you—especially if the pains are due to constipation accompanied by flatulence. (5-6-33)

SELF: I asked you not to consider what I thought of the matter in order to avoid personal hesitations. My physical condition is as follows: anything else than liquid food makes my stomach suffer. But I shall now forget all about the pain because I have handed it over to you. I think it was lack of faith that prevented me from going to my work. Tomorrow I must anyhow do my work.

SRI AUROBINDO: If the pains are strong, you can abstain from work for a day or two till they have subsided. Of course if you feel that you suffer from

## SOUL

anything else but liquid food, that settles the question.—You can take liquid food only and if you take the liquid food only then you will not be strong enough to work. But usually the thought takes a big part in determining these things.—The mind has the impression that any solid food will hurt and the body follows—so naturally as a result any solid food does begin to hurt. (5-6-33)

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## SOUL

O sacred face of inward dawn,  
O face of rose!  
The secrets of a deathless land  
Your lips disclose.

O candid limbs of snowy charm,  
O limbs of grace!  
You lift up mortals' yearning far  
Beyond all space.

O tender eyes of azure love,  
O star-like eyes!  
The beauty of a distant sky  
Is your depths' surprise.

O being of light, and dream of flame,  
O ardent delight!  
Heaven's gold grandeur you have brought  
To human sight.

PRITHWINDRA  
(*Ashram School*)



## WITH THE STUDENTS

### III

#### THE PROGRESS OF INDIA

TODAY we were talking of progress and some of you were thinking that it would be a very long while before India could progress materially and catch up with the progress made by the West. We should be reminded that the only progress worth having first is the *progress of the soul*, because it is through the growth of the soul that the transformation of human nature and life becomes possible. Is India behind in such progress? No! In this respect she is foremost among all the nations of the earth. True progress is growth of consciousness, which in turn creates truer harmonies of richer and grander magnitudes; vibrations of feeling, love and knowledge, growing always more and more pure. And a progression of evolution must always start from within the individual, spread to the society, the nation, the world, the universe. Because that which is evolving is evolving out of its involved latent state, and such evolving is the very *raison d'être* of progress. The progress of the purely outer material organisation of life will also be seen to be relative if we look at it over a proper period of time. For instance, India as a whole will not now have to pass through the gas age as England and a large part of Europe had to before they came to the age of electricity—it will pass directly from oil lamps to electricity, or even perhaps some parts of the country may leap directly into the age of atomic power. Because of Robert Stephenson, England was the first to have the steam engine running on rails, but it also had the labour of its birth, the trials and errors of early experiments; while other countries waited to adopt the perfected engine. Where a new thing of progress takes birth matters very little to the actual progress; that it adds to the growth of the world at large is the real thing of importance. So too, India's progress is in another direction to that of the West, but to its spiritual riches it will add the material wealth of the West. Spirituality and Science—taking the term in its widest sense—should go hand in hand if a stable and enduring organisation of earthly life is to be created, or if man is to realise the kingdom of God upon earth.

## WITH THE STUDENTS

### WHAT IS NOT POSSIBLE

Today when in class I demanded of you something a little more difficult than usual, one of you said: "But I can't!" I replied that "can't" is a word not to be found in the dictionary. Apart from the fact that the word is an idiomatic contraction of the word "cannot" my words meant to imply that to say or think that a task is not possible for your capacities is to invite defeat before you start. We seldom know our capabilities until we try, and when, by the force of circumstances, we are sometimes made to try more vigorously than usual, are we not often surprised at the result?

I once saw a boy, who in the school sports was rather a weakling, jump clean over a five foot hedge when being chased by a bull in a field. You may say this is an extreme case, but it goes to show that we can more often than not do better than we think we can. Man knows his depths but seldom knows his heights—for it is easier to fall than to climb. But to climb is our true nature, to fall is not. We only have to find the method; we are evolutionary beings and we cannot do other than evolve, which means, ever to climb to heights unknown. You have only to look at the world around you to know that nearly all our modern inventions, and some we can hardly call modern today, were all impossibilities to man in a bygone age,—and what shall be impossible to the man of the future? You students have an adventurous life before you, each new dawn brings the possibility of a wider horizon in heart, mind and body; let nothing dismay you or discourage you in your quest for that Supreme Discovery that is the heritage of your existence. Let the spirit of pure adventure carry you to the heights of your consciousness, for you are children of the Divine Mother and to Her nothing is impossible that treads the road to God.

NORMAN DOWSETT

## THE SUPREME

ON the surface of all things,  
In the depth of all Truths, this  
One Being ever-living, whose wide wings  
Glide over creation; He is all that is.

Huge space which mortal eyes can follow not,  
Where all is eternity—His Self knows no bound,  
Invisible, immeasurable, and yet a flash is caught.  
No trace is left yet behind all He is found.

A path towards Immortality He leads...  
Dumb and obscure is the Universe but for Thee,  
Thy Grace and Power and Light are thrown as seeds;  
My open self feels the One Supreme, vast as the sea!

RAMRAJ  
(*Ashram School*)