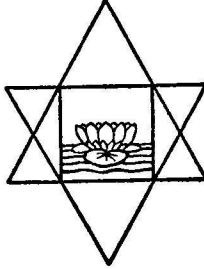


MOTHER INDIA

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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

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"Great is Truth and it shall prevail"

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THE MOTHER'S TALKS

THOUGHT AND IMAGINATION

WHEN you think of a person or a thing you are immediately there and come into contact with the object of your thought. But this happens in the thought world only; you know nothing of the vital or physical context of the object. Thought is conscious of thought only in the mental world; by your thought you can be conscious of the mental atmosphere of the distant object, of the thought of the person to whom you go, but nothing else, absolutely nothing of his vital or physical.

If you want to know of the vital you must go to the object vitally; it means an exteriorisation that leaves the body at least three-fourths in trance. And if you want to see things physically, you will have to go out in your most material subtle physical; that leaves the body in an entirely catalytic condition. These things cannot be done without someone by your side who has the right knowledge and who can protect you.

But the mental exteriorisation happens constantly. It puts you in relation with the mental world. If you are very conscious and the person you see in thought is also very conscious, then you can know of the ideas and opinions which the person might form at that time, but even then only indirectly, you do not know directly.

When you imagine a thing, it means that you make a mental formation which may be near to the truth or far from it according to the quality of your formation. There are people who have this power of formation to such an extent that they are capable of realising what they imagine. They imagine some thing and they make such a strong well-shaped formation that they succeed in materialising it. They are truly creators. There are not many like that, but there surely are a few.

You can meet a dead person also in your thought if he continues to be in the mental world; you can be in contact with his mind and have a sort of mental vision of his life there. But if he is gone to the psychic world, then thinking of him is not sufficient; you must know how to go into the psychic world and meet him there.

The mind has its own power of vision; it is not the vision of the physical eyes, but it is yet vision, perception through forms. It is not imagination which is a quite different faculty. Suppose you figure to yourself an ideal being to whom you attribute all conceptions of ideality you have. You say he must be like this, he must be like that, his thoughts are like this, his character like that; you fill up all the details and build up the being. Well, that is the work of imagination. Literary men, novel-writers, always do this kind of construction. Of course, there are writers who take up things from life, but there are others who imagine things and impose them upon life. A character, a concourse of circumstances, a whole chain of events, they spin out of their head. And if they are powerful and possess sufficient creative force, it is quite possible there may be one day actually a physical human being embodying the type imagined.

You can make use of imagination for a high purpose. With its help you can recreate your inner and outer life. You can wholly build your life if you know how to use it and have the power. As a matter of fact, it is the most ordinary and primary way of creating and forming things in the world. I had always the impression that if one had not the capacity of imagination, one would not make any progress. Your imagination always goes ahead of your life. When you think of yourself, usually you imagine what you would like to become—that comes first, the prevision, and then you follow it up; you continue to imagine and realise, realise and imagine. Imagination opens the way to realisation. It is very difficult to move unimaginative people. They see only what is just in front of their nose, they feel only what is there at a given moment. They cannot advance, they are blocked by the immediate present. It is imagination that makes the whole difference.

Men of science also have and should have a large power of imagination; otherwise they would discover nothing. Imagination is, in reality, the capacity to project oneself out of realised things towards things realisable and pull them in by the very power of projection. It is true there is a progressive and there is a regressive imagination. There are people who always imagine all possible catastrophes and have the power even to make them come. However, imagination has its good use. It sends out, as it were, *antennae* into a world that is not yet realised, and they catch hold of something there and draw it here. Naturally, it means an addition to earth's atmosphere, addition of things that tend towards manifestation. Imagination then is an instrument that one can train and discipline and use at will. It is one of the principal faculties that should be developed and made serviceable.

Even, you can imagine the Divine and come into contact with Him. You do in fact come into contact with that which you imagine. Do you know you cannot imagine anything that is not somewhere? It may not exist here upon

THE MOTHER'S TALKS

earth, but it is and must be elsewhere. As I say, it is impossible to imagine anything that is not contained in the universe in principle at least. Otherwise it would not be there even as an idea.

The universe is progressive. That is to say, more and more things constantly manifest themselves there. Now, imagination is a faculty by which you go beyond the range of manifested things; if you have progressed so far as to imagine things that are not yet manifested, you already help in bringing down these things and making them part of the manifested reality. Naturally, you must know how to go beyond the manifested universe in order to be able to imagine what is not there. And there are many, many such things.

First of all, you must know how to get beyond the terrestrial manifestation, in order to be able to imagine a new thing in it. And how many millions of years has earth existed ! What has been the output of new things there? Countless, for no two things upon earth are exactly the same, although they may be very similar. It is not easy with your mind to get out of the earthly atmosphere. But if you have succeeded in doing that, you have to get out of the universal life. To enter into contact with all that has been here upon earth since the beginning of its appearance till the present day and then to enter into contact with the universal of which the earth forms only a tiny particle from its beginning to its formulation today—this is not sufficient. You have still to go beyond, beyond the universal, into the transcendent, the unmanifest. Then you can think of imagining and bringing down something new into the manifestation and upon earth. Not that one cannot do this. But it is not so easy.

6-7-1955

NOLINI KANTA GUPTA

YOGIC GUIDANCE

(Unpublished Letters of Sri Aurobindo)

I

THE outer guidance is meant only as an aid to the inner working, especially for the correction of any erroneous movement and sometimes in order to point out the right road. It is not meant, except at a very early stage, to satisfy mental questionings or to stimulate a mental activity.

*

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Even if the permanent opening does not come at once, you have only to wait for it and it is bound to come. It is certainly a pity that the restlessness of the vital should kick so much against vacancy of the consciousness; for if you could stand it this emptiness, now neutral and therefore not interesting to the vital, would become positive and be the peaceful recipient of the pouring from above. The difficulty is that the vital has always been accustomed either to doing something or to something doing and when it is doing nothing or nothing is doing (or it seems like that on the surface), it gets bored and begins to feel and talk or to do nonsense. However, even with this obstacle, the Descent can come down—it need not wait for the Supramental.

*

*

I want you to be open and in contact with the Peace and Presence and Force. All else will come if that is there and then one need not be troubled by the time it takes in the peripeties of the sadhana.

*

*

Cheerfulness is the salt of the sadhana.—It is a thousand times better than gloominess.

YOGIC GUIDANCE

(Q: *I am trying to be silent within, but the mood of jocularity persists. Is this not, however, a sign of cheerfulness?*)

Not always—moreover the cheerfulness is vital. I do not say that it should not be there, but there is a deeper cheerfulness, an inner *sukhahasya* which is the spiritual condition of cheerfulness.

*

*

You are quite right in taking an optimistic and not a pessimistic attitude in the sadhana—progressive sadhana is enormously helped by an assured faith and confidence. Such a confidence helps to realise, for it is dynamic and tends to fulfil itself.

II

The stream which you feel coming down on the head and pouring into you is indeed a current of the Mother's force; it is so that it is often felt; it flows into the body in currents and works there to liberate and change the consciousness. As the consciousness changes and develops, you will begin yourself to understand the meaning and working of these things.

*

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As for the other matter, there are two different things. Some people have a faculty of receiving impressions about others which is not by any means infallible, but often or else turns out to be right. That is one thing and the Yogic intuition by which one directly knows or feels what is in a man, his capacities, character, temperament is another. The first may be a help for developing the other, but it is not the same thing. The Yogic faculty has to be and it can be complete only with a great development of the inner consciousness.

*

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The absence of thought is quite the right thing—for the true inner consciousness is a silent consciousness which has not to think out things, but gets the right perception, understanding and knowledge in a spontaneous way from within and speaks or acts according to that. It is the outer consciousness which has to depend on outside things and to think about them because it has not this spontaneous guidance. When one is fixed in this inner consciousness, then one

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can indeed go back to the old action by an effort of will, but it is no longer a natural movement and, if long maintained, becomes fatiguing. As for the dreams, that is different. Dreams about old bygone things come up from the subconscious which retains the old impressions and the seeds of the old movements and habits long after the waking consciousness has dropped them. Abandoned by the waking consciousness, they still come up in dreams; for in sleep the outer physical consciousness goes down into the subconscious or towards it and many dreams come up from there.

The silence in which all is quiet and one remains as a witness while something in the consciousness spontaneously calls down the higher things is the complete silence which comes when the full force of the higher consciousness is upon mind and vital and body.

Things inside can be seen as distinctly as outward things whether in an image by the subtle vision or in their essence by a still more subtle and powerful way of seeing; but all these things have to develop in order to get their full power and intensity.

TRANCE EXPERIENCES*

Q. X told me that if one leaves the physical consciousness one can easily have the experience of the Brahman everywhere and in all things.

SRI AUROBINDO: If he means by leaving the physical consciousness going into samadhi that is not much use—it is the waking consciousness of the Brahman everywhere that is needed—and for that the physical consciousness must be there.

Q. During today's experience even my body consciousness was so much submerged in peace and silence, that had it not been for the last vestiges of my sense of the mind it would have been a complete trance.

SRI AUROBINDO: Trance would be not sufficient—the waking consciousness must be the same.

Q. Why is trance not sufficient? Is it not my present need?

SRI AUROBINDO: It is not a trance but a new consciousness that is wanted.

Q. During the noon nap sometimes I enter into a vaster and more solid peace than during the waking state.

SRI AUROBINDO: That is why people used to seek it most in the Samadhi—But for us it must be there both in sleep and waking.

Q. For the last two days there has been a strong urge to sleep at noon. Normally I don't sleep at that time.

SRI AUROBINDO: Sometimes the pressure brings a tendency to go inside which takes the form of sleep.

Q. Can I not turn this push for sleep into something better than sleep?

SRI AUROBINDO: It can only be either thrown off in form of waking concentration or turned into some push of insideness (usually called samadhi).

* Compiled from Sri Aurobindo's unpublished letters.

Q. But how can that be done when the pressure brings only slumber—an unconscious sleep?

SRI AUROBINDO: The slumber can change into insideness.

Such pressure only comes (1) when the body needs sleep, not having had enough or because enough rest is not given, (2) when it wants to recuperate after illness or strong fatigue (3) when there is a pressure from above which the physical consciousness or part of it replies to by trying to go inside.

Q. How does the slumber change into insideness?

SRI AUROBINDO: There is no device for it. It comes with the growth of the inner consciousness.

Q. Is our normal sleep meant for the physical consciousness to go inside and reply to the higher pressure?

SRI AUROBINDO: No. But when the pressure gives a tendency to insideness (samadhi), the physical being not being accustomed to go inside except in the way of sleep translates this into a sense of sleepiness.

Q. I thought our sleep was an act that took us into the depths of subconsciousness and inertia!

SRI AUROBINDO: That is the ordinary sleep, but under pressure of Yogic force sleep often gets a tendency to change into the Yogic *Swapna—samādhi*.

Q. In our Yoga is not trance necessary? Does it not help in working out certain things?

SRI AUROBINDO: Yes; but it is not so important or indispensable as in other Yogas. But plenty of people have the easier forms of samadhi here.

Q. What are these easier forms of samadhi?

SRI AUROBINDO: The forms of swapna samadhi in which they go inside and are conscious and have visions and experiences within, but are unconscious of outer things.

Q. Why do some people get this kind of samadhi and not others?

SRI AUROBINDO: There is no fixed reason for these things. It depends on the turn of the nature.

TRANCE EXPERIENCES

Q. But is not our work more important than trances or experiences?

SRI AUROBINDO: Trances and experiences have their value. There is no question of less or more important—each thing has its place.

Q. During this noon sleep some strong spiritual movement seemed to be taking place, but I cannot remember at all what it was.

SRI AUROBINDO: That is quite natural. The usual movement does not take place, but there is still a pressure habitual at the time under which the consciousness goes inside not into sleep but into some kind of samadhi in which working takes place in the inner consciousness. As yet you have not developed the power of being conscious in this state nor the power of remembering what took place.

Q. Why does the tendency for sleep at noon come in certain circumstances only?

The tendency for sleep under such circumstances is always the same thing, the tendency of the physical consciousness to go inside under the pressure from above.

Q. Does the samadhi during the afternoon nap come to bring a greater emptiness or voidness than at other times?

SRI AUROBINDO: If you mean that after this kind of samadhi, you feel a greater emptiness or voidness, it is quite natural. To void the being of the old consciousness and its movements and to fill the mind from above are the two main processes now by the Force from above.

Q. Why is there often a voidness in the being, but never the fullness which ought to follow this voidness?

SRI AUROBINDO: You have written of the Force coming down—even sometimes of its filling all parts—so what is this “never”? I did not at all mean that there is a mechanical process by which every time there is emptiness afterwards there comes an entire filling up. It depends on the stage of the sadhana. The emptiness may come often or stay long before there is any descent—what fills may be silence, and peace or Force or Knowledge and this may fill only the mind or mind and heart or mind and heart and vital or all. But there is nothing fixed and mechanically regular about these two processes.

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Q. Why do I have samadhi during the noon sleep only and not during the night sleep?

SRI AUROBINDO: Because at night, the body needs and is accustomed to sleep as rest not to sleep-samadhi.

Q. During the noon sleep, dreams come at times in the same way as in the night sleep. Can it still be called a swapna samadhi?

SRI AUROBINDO: It may pass into only a dream sometimes,—that often happens; there is a fluctuation between the two states.

(To be continued)

THE SECRET OF THE VEDA

SRI AUROBINDO

SELECTED HYMNS

VISHNU, THE ALL-PERVADING GODHEAD

RIGVEDA I. 154

1. Of Vishnu now I declare the mighty works, who has measured out the earthly worlds and that higher seat of our self-accomplishing he supports, he the wide-moving, in the threefold steps of his universal movement.

2. That Vishnu affirms on high by his mightiness and he is like a terrible lion that ranges in the difficult places, yea, his lair is on the mountain-tops, he in whose three wide movements all the worlds find their dwelling-place.

3. Let our strength and our thought go forward to Vishnu the all-pervading, the wide-moving Bull whose dwelling-place is on the mountain, he who being One has measured all this long and far-extending seat of our self-accomplishing by only three of his strides.

4. He whose three steps are full of the honey-wine and they perish not but have ecstasy by the self-harmony of their nature; yea, he being One holds the triple principle and earth and heaven also, even all the worlds.

5. May I attain to and enjoy that goal of his movement, the Delight, where souls that seek the godhead have the rapture; for there in that highest step of the wide-moving Vishnu is that Friend of men who is the fount of the sweetness.

6. Those are the dwelling-places of ye twain which we desire as the goal of our journey where the many-horned herds of Light go travelling; the highest step of wide-moving Vishnu shines down on us here in its manifold vastness.

COMMENTARY

The deity of this hymn is Vishnu the all-pervading, who in the Rig Veda has a close but covert connection and almost an identity with the other deity exalted in the later religion, Rudra. Rudra is a fierce and violent godhead with a beneficent aspect which approaches the supreme blissful reality of Vishnu; Vishnu's constant friendliness to man and his helping gods is shadowed by an

aspect of formidable violence,—“like a terrible lion ranging in evil and difficult places”—which is spoken of in terms more ordinarily appropriate to Rudra. Rudra is the father of the vehemently-battling Maruts; Vishnu is hymned in the last Sukta of the fifth Mandala under the name of Evaya Marut as the source from which they sprang, that which they become and himself identical with the unity and totality of their embattled forces. Rudra is the Deva or Deity ascending in the cosmos, Vishnu the same Deva or Deity helping and evoking the powers of the ascent.

It was a view long popularised by European scholars that the greatness of Vishnu and Shiva in the Puranic theogonies was a later development and that in the Veda these gods have a quite minor position and are inferior to Indra and Agni. It has even become a current opinion among many scholars that Shiva was a later conception borrowed from the Dravidians and represents a partial conquest of the Vedic religion by the indigenous culture it had invaded. These errors arise inevitably as part of the total misunderstanding of Vedic thought for which the old Brahmanic ritualism is responsible and to which European scholarship by the exaggeration of a minor and external element in the Vedic mythology has only given a new and yet more misleading form.

The importance of the Vedic gods has not to be measured by the number of hymns devoted to them or by the extent to which they are invoked in the thoughts of the Rishis, but by the functions which they perform. Agni and Indra to whom the majority of the Vedic hymns are addressed, are not greater than Vishnu and Rudra, but the functions which they fulfil in the internal and external world were the most active, dominant and directly effective for the psychological discipline of the ancient Mystics; this alone is the reason of their predominance. The Maruts, children of Rudra, are not divinities superior to their fierce and mighty Father; but they have many hymns addressed to them and are far more constantly mentioned in connection with other gods, because the function they fulfilled was of a constant and immediate importance in the Vedic discipline. On the other hand, Vishnu, Rudra, Brahmanaspati, the Vedic originals of the later Puranic Triad, Vishnu-Shiva-Brahma, provide the conditions of the Vedic work, and assist it from behind the more present and active gods, but are less close to it and in appearance less continually concerned in its daily movements.

Brahmanaspati is the creator by the Word; he calls light and visible cosmos out of the darkness of the inconscient ocean and speeds the formations of conscious being upward to their supreme goal. It is from this creative aspect of Brahmanaspati that the later conception of Brahma the Creator arose.

For the upward movement of Brahmanaspati's formations Rudra supplies the force. He is named in the Veda the Mighty One of the Heaven, but he

begins his work upon the earth and gives effect to the sacrifice on the five planes of our ascent. He is the Violent One who leads the upward evolution of the conscious being; his force battles against all evil, smites the sinner and the enemy; intolerant of defect and stumbling he is the most terrible of the gods, the one of whom alone the Vedic Rishis have any real fear. Agni, the Kumara, prototype of the Puranic Skanda, is on earth the child of this force of Rudra. The Maruts, vital powers which make light for themselves by violence, are Rudra's children. Agni and the Maruts are the leaders of the fierce struggle upward from Rudra's first earthly, obscure creation to the heavens of thought, the luminous worlds. But this violent and mighty Rudra who breaks down all defective formations and groupings of outward and inward life, has also a benigner aspect. He is the supreme healer. Opposed, he destroys; called on for aid and propitiated he heals all wounds and all evil and all sufferings. The force that battles is his gift, but also the final peace and joy. In these aspects of the Vedic god are all the primitive materials necessary for the evolution of the Puranic Shiva-Rudra, the destroyer and healer, the auspicious and terrible, the Master of the force that acts in the worlds and the Yogin who enjoys the supreme liberty and peace.

For the formations of Brahmanaspati's word, for the actions of Rudra's force Vishnu supplies the necessary static elements,—Space, the ordered movements of the worlds, the ascending levels, the highest goal. He has taken three strides and in the space created by the three strides has established all the worlds. In these worlds he the all-pervading dwells and gives less or greater room to the action and movements of the gods. When Indra would slay Vritra, he first prays to Vishnu, his friend and comrade in the great struggle, "O Vishnu, pace out in thy movement with an utter wideness," and in that wideness he destroys Vritra who limits, Vritra who covers. The supreme step of Vishnu, his highest seat, is the triple world of bliss and light, *priyam padam*, which the wise ones see extended in heaven like a shining eye of vision; it is this highest seat of Vishnu that is the goal of the Vedic journey. Here again the Vedic Vishnu is the natural precursor and sufficient origin of the Puranic Narayana, Preserver and Lord of Love.

In the Veda indeed its fundamental conception forbids the Puranic arrangement of the supreme Trinity and the lesser gods. To the Vedic Rishis there was only one universal Deva of whom Vishnu, Rudra, Brahmanaspati, Agni, Indra, Vayu, Mitra, Varuna are all alike forms and cosmic aspects. Each of them is in himself the whole Deva and contains all the other gods. It was the full emergence in the Upanishads of the idea of this supreme and only Deva, left in the Riks vague and undefined and sometimes even spoken of in the neuter as That or the one sole existence, the ritualistic limitation of the other gods and

the progressive precision of their human or personal aspects under the stress of a growing mythology that led to their degradation and the enthronement of the less used and more general names and forms, Brahma, Vishnu and Rudra, in the final Puranic formulation of the Hindu theogony.

In this hymn of Dirghatamas Auchathya to the all-pervading Vishnu it is his significant activity, it is the greatness of Vishnu's three strides that is celebrated. We must dismiss from our minds the ideas proper to the later mythology. We have nothing to do here with the dwarf Vishnu, the Titan Bali and the three divine strides which took possession of Earth, Heaven and the sunless subterrestrial worlds of Patala. The three strides of Vishnu in the Veda are clearly defined by Dirghatamas as earth, heaven and the triple principle, *tridhātu*. It is this triple principle beyond Heaven or superimposed upon it as its highest level, *nākasya pṛṣṭhe*, which is the supreme stride or supreme seat of the all-pervading deity.

Vishnu is the wide-moving one. He is that which has gone abroad—as it is put in the language of the Isha Upanishad, *sa paryagāt*,—triplly extending himself as Seer, Thinker and Former, in the superconscient Bliss, in the heaven of mind, in the earth of the physical consciousness, *tredhā vicakramāṅ'ah*. In those three strides he has measured out, he has formed in all their extension the earthly worlds; for in the Vedic idea the material world which we inhabit is only one of several steps leading to and supporting the vital and mental worlds beyond. In those strides he supports upon the earth and mid-world,—the earth the material, the mid-world the vital realms of Vayu, Lord of the dynamic Life-principle,—the triple heaven and its three luminous summits, *trīṅ'i rocanā*. These heavens the Rishi describes as the higher seat of the fulfilling. Earth, the mid-world and heaven are the triple place of the conscious being's progressive self-fulfilling, *triśadhasṭha*, earth the lower seat, the vital world the middle, heaven the higher. All these are contained in the threefold movement of Vishnu.¹

But there is more; there is also the world where the self-fulfilment is accomplished, Vishnu's highest stride. In the second verse the seer speaks of it simply as "that"; "that" Vishnu, moving yet forward in his third pace affirms or firmly establishes, *pra stavate*, by his divine might. Vishnu is then described in language which hints at his essential identity with the terrible Rudra, the fierce and dangerous Lion of the worlds who begins in the evolution as the Master of the animal, Pashupati, and moves upward on the mountain of being on which he dwells, ranging through more and more difficult and inaccessible places, till he stands upon the summits. Thus in these three wide movements of

¹ *Vishnoṛ nu kaṁ vīryāni pra vocam, yaḥ pārthivām vimame rajānsi; yo askabhāyad uttaram sadhasṭham, vicakramāṅas tredhorugāyah.*

Vishnu all the five worlds and their creatures have their habitation. Earth, heaven and "that" world of bliss are the three strides. Between earth and heaven is the Antariksha, the vital worlds, literally "the intervening habitation". Between heaven and the world of bliss is another vast Antariksha or intervening habitation. Maharloka, the world of the superconscious Truth of things.¹

The force and the thought of man, the force that proceeds from Rudra the Mighty and the thought that proceeds from Brahmanaspati, the creative Master of the Word, have to go forward in the great journey for or towards this Vishnu who stands at the goal, on the summit, on the peak of the mountain. His is this wide universal movement; he is the Bull of the world who enjoys and fertilises all the energies of force and all the trooping herds of the thought. This far-flung extended space which appears to us as the world of our self-fulfilment, as the triple altar of the great sacrifice has been so measured out, so formed by only three strides of that almighty Infinite.²

All the three are full of the honey-wine of the delight of existence. All of them this Vishnu fills with his divine joy of being. By that they are eternally maintained and they do not waste or perish, but in the self-harmony of their natural movement have always the unfailing ecstasy, the imperishable intoxication of their wide and limitless existence. Vishnu maintains them unfailingly, preserves them imperishably. He is the One, he alone is, the sole-existing God-head, and he holds in his being the triple divine principle to which we attain the world of bliss, earth where we have our foundation and heaven also which we touch by the mental person within us. All the five worlds he upholds.³ The *tridhātu*, the triple principle or triple material of existence, is the Sachchidananda of the Vedanta; in the ordinary language of the Veda it is *vasu*, substance, *ūrj*, abounding force of our being, *priyam*, or *mayas*, delight and love in the very essence of our existence. Of these three things all that exists is constituted and we attain to their fullness when we arrive at the goal of our journey.

That goal is Delight, the last of Vishnu's three strides. The Rishi takes up the indefinite word "tat" by which he first vaguely indicated it; it signified the delight that is the goal of Vishnu's movement. It is the Ananda which for man in his ascent is a world in which he tastes divine delight, possesses the full energy of infinite consciousness, realises his infinite existence. There is that high-placed source of the honey-wine of existence of which the three strides of

¹ *Pra tad viṣṇuḥ stavate vīryeṇa, mṛgo na bhūmah kucaro grīṣṭhaḥ; yasyoruṣu trisu vikramanesu, adhiṣṭiyanti bhuvanāni viśvā.*

² *Pra viṣṇave śūsam etu manma, grīṣṭita urugāyāya vrsṇe; Ya idaṁ dīrgham prayatam sadhastham, eko vimame tribhū u padebhū.*

³ *Yasya trī pūrṇā madhunā padāni, akṣīyamāṇā swadhayā madanti; ya u tridhātu pṛthvīm uta dyām, eko dādāhāra bhuvanāni viśvā.*

Vishnu are full. There the souls that seek the godhead live in the utter ecstasy of that wine of sweetness. There in the supreme stride, in the highest seat of wide-moving Vishnu is the fountain of the honey-wine, the source of the divine sweetness,—for that which dwells there is the Godhead, the Deva, the perfect Friend and Lover of the souls that aspire to him, the unmoving and utter reality of Vishnu to which the wide-moving God in the cosmos ascends.¹

These are the two, Vishnu of the movement here, the eternally stable, bliss-enjoying Deva there, and it is those supreme dwelling-places of the Twain, it is the triple world of Sachchidananda which we desire as the goal of this long journey, this great upward movement. It is thither that the many-horned herds of the conscious Thought, the conscious Force are moving—that is the goal, that is their resting-place. There in those worlds, gleaming down on us here, is the vast, full, illimitable shining of the supreme stride, the highest seat of the wide-moving Bull, master and leader of all those many-horned herds,—Vishnu the all-pervading, the cosmic Deity, the Lover and Friend of our souls, the Lord of the transcendent existence and the transcendent delight.²

¹ *Tad asya priyam abhipātho a yām naro yatra devayavo madanti; urukramasya sa hi bandhur ūthā, viṣṇoh pade parame madhva utsah.*

² *Tā vām vāstūny uśmasi gamadhya yatra gāvo bhūriṅgā ayāsaḥ, atrāha tad urugāyasya vṛṣṇaḥ, paramam padam avabhātu bhūri.*

VISIONS

I

A blind background of nothingness; a bare
 Horizonless desert covered up by a vast
 Skyless mist: with a sudden violent blast
It cracked; and the leap of a red, fiery glare

Revealed from the dense mist a blazing mountain
 Of crimsoned snow and ranges of purple light
 Kissed by a cobalt firmament; leaving the height
A violet river streamed from its luminous fountain

Through the valleys' labyrinth of emerald green.
 There rose a form of beauty and immaculate grace—
 A silver halo round the moon-white face—
And towards me slowly came. With her hands of sheen

She held the violet drink in a golden cup before
My yearning lips. I drank; the vision was no more!

NIRODBARAN: This is a new poem by Nishikanta. He says that he is going to paint the vision he had of the violet stream and the girl of sixteen; so he would like you to illumine him regarding its significance.

SRI AUROBINDO: "Violet" is the colour of benevolence or compassion, but also more vividly of the Divine Grace—represented in the vision as flowing from the heights of the spiritual consciousness down on the earth. The golden cup is I suppose the Truth Consciousness. (14-1-1936)

II

SADHAK: Whilst I was having a nap in the afternoon, I had a vision of a very beautiful woman sitting under the sun. The rays of the sun were either

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surrounding her or were emanating from her body—I can't precisely say which. The appearance and dress seemed to be more European than oriental.

SRI AUROBINDO: It is not a woman. A woman does not radiate and is not surrounded by rays either. Probably a Sun Goddess or a Shakti of the inner Light, one of the Mother's Powers. (20-12-1935)

III

SRI AUROBINDO: About the snake you saw in your meditation—serpents indicate always energies of Nature and very often bad energies of the vital plane; but they can also indicate luminous or divine energies like the Snake of Vishnu. The one you saw was evidently of this latter type—a luminous divine energy and therefore there was no cause for alarm, it was a good sign.

CALL OF THE GRACE

A RAY of light, a sudden rapture's thrill
Can break the spell of life's grey monotone;
A greater call annuls its surface drone,
The heart inhales the breath of a mightier Will.

When the Infinite's flute is heard, a sea-change comes:
The finite's trance disrupts, the soul outpours
Its mystic light for the traveller's onward course
To reach the Temple with its silent domes.

The little gods of life become a bar,
But the house of Flame with its white-mooned magic doors
Now opens by the subtlety of a Force
Compelling. To the tryst moves on the car.

O Grace supreme! O Love omnipotent!
I clasp Thy knees, let all the veils be rent.

PRITHWI SINGH

MATTER, LIFE, MIND

A SCRUTINY OF SCIENTIFIC OPINIONS

THIRD SERIES: III

A MONISM-IN-PLURALISM which does not minimise within the final synthesis any of the principles concerned and finds itself in a reality not only above Matter but also above Mind and takes up the essential values of past mystico-spiritual traditions to orientate them towards this-worldly ends that are inseparable from the temper of science: such is the system we have patiently discerned as part indicated and part implicit in the scientific findings within the domains of physical, vital, mental, para-psychological phenomena.

Here two points, apropos our mention of the temper of science, may be touched upon. The first is akin to a question we tackled when discussing Einstein's conception of theory in physics and is really another manner of putting that question. We may be asked: "Do not science's this-worldly ends include an insistence on explaining everything in terms of matter? Can we ever speak of the temper proper to science and not reject your neo-mysticism?" Well, there is an idea fairly common that science needs no world-view to be found for it by impartial evaluation of its main concepts: science is believed to have been born with a world-view in its eyes—materialism. But this is a mistake. Correctly speaking, science is not pledged to materialism as a dogma. Its approach is materialistic in the sense that it is a quest for knowledge basing itself on the universe that is observable by the bodily senses and there comes in consequence a stress on material reality. Its approach is materialistic also in the sense that it proceeds to study and analyse the universe presented to the senses, *as if* nothing except matter existed. That "as if" is of capital importance in understanding science: it is necessary for scientists because without it they would miss a sharp spur to making more and more subtle and elaborate discoveries in the field of sense-apprehended objects, but it clearly suggests a hypothetical or methodological materialism as contrasted to a materialism that is dogmatic. Science cannot afford to be dogmatic: it has constantly to keep an open mind in order to extend the range of its observation and arrive at new theories correlating an ever-wider body of facts. Nor need correlation be always mathematical as in physics. The essence of correlation is logic and not mathematics. Mathematics is, in general, logic applied to quantities or what may symbolise

them: it does not exhaust the meaning of correlation. Correlation is mathematical or non-mathematical according as the reality it deals with is quantitatively measurable or not: in short, according as the reality is material or ultra-material. A mathematical theory, therefore, is not a *sine qua non* of science. But, of course, Science should try to push mathematics as far as possible and, in consonance with its natural stress on material reality, it does make one inexorable demand: material results—that is, observable crucial consequences of every theory and increase in the possibilities of physical being and action.

All this does not mean that a number of scientists are not materialists. What we have called the materialistic approach tends easily to induce in less careful minds a dogmatic materialism which looks upon the physical universe as a closed system complete in itself rather than as a certain façade of a larger many-layered interrelated cosmos unified in some principle which transcends materiality and yet includes it. In fact, the age we live in partly overlaps and partly emerges from one in which science not only put a tremendous emphasis on material reality but also sought to unify all existence under the concept of matter. This move had as its main origin and driving power the discovery of organic evolution. The old line dividing man from other living creatures and, among all living creatures, the demarcation between species and species were erased. Everything organic was traced to a common ancestral form, a primitive protoplasm. Even the barrier between organic and inorganic was thinned, and theory confidently asserted that all matter is a unity and that the phenomena of life and mind and whatever subtle activity is termed the soul are not distinct from the physical world but developments of its inherent potencies through a complex organisation of its elementary particles. Such a view of nature brushed aside the privileged position conventional religion had given to man, and the contempt in which religious philosophy had held the world of matter and bodily life, and the straining it had encouraged towards a Beyond as the scene of human completion. Science reacted in the direction of the opposite extreme, putting a premium on the Here and Now and condemning all non-materialistic speculation as hallucinated folly.

So one-sided, so thoroughly exclusive a conception was bound to have little finality in a multifarious world like ours. And we have tried to show how scientific study compels us in every field to put materialism aside—even a neo-materialism such as suggested once by Julian Huxley, which makes mind and matter two aspects of a single organisation or world-stuff in which the chief and basic aspect is matter. That monism of this sort does not do justice to the full findings of scientific enquiry is most glaringly evident from parapsychology, the statistically measured facts of extra-sensory perception; but otherwise too it stands convicted of error as soon as we discover that what is known

in the biological field as "organic unity" cannot be explained either by extrapolating ordinary physics and chemistry to the cell-compound or by seeking with Von Bertalanffy a new physics and chemistry of the organic under which ultimately the physics and chemistry of the inorganic will be subsumed: if in its central processes life is independent of and not ruled by material organisation, much less can mind in its distinction from matter be a mere helpless accompaniment of physical events.

Yes, pluralism cannot be avoided in scientific philosophy. A plane of life and a plane of mind must be declared to exist together with the material plane. At the same time, within a certain range the close connection between matter and non-matter which science has demonstrated, the amount of correlation it has found between the physical and the vital-mental, the developmental and evolutionary continuity stressed by Huxleyan monism appear to suffer some injustice of description if they are understood as the locked interplay of entities quite distinct rather than aspects of one single entity. Life and mind are of two sorts, one of which is exactly as if matter itself were transposed to a vital and mental key and the activity of such life and mind is inseparable from physico-chemical organisation. But the implications of this inseparableness are quite other than those envisaged by monism of the Huxleyan type: we have demonstrated these implications and also stepped by a justifiable analogy to a life-plane in which matter and mind are subordinated to life, as well as a mind-plane in which matter and life are subordinated to mind. Further we have examined the heart of the evolution-concept and argued evolution to be a fact of only our terrestrial existence, while life and mind on their own planes are typical rather than evolutionary. From this we have proceeded to posit a typical matter-plane also behind earth-evolution, and finally we have looked beyond mind itself to what the mystical traditions call Spirit and we have visioned the evolution of the Spirit with a perfect material, vital, mental instrument as the future to which unbiased scrutiny of scientific data must point.

Quite a complexity is here—with a harmony of "isms" which ordinarily fall apart or glare at one another. And some may object to it by invoking "simplicity" as the guiding slogan of the scientific temper. This objection is the second of the two points we proposed to touch upon. But those who do so are not really being simple in the genuine logical sense. Logically speaking, simplicity of hypothesis lies in embracing the widest range of fact within the smallest set of axioms. The smallest set may be a very complex thing, but it is the simplest compatible with the multifarious factuality that has to be comprehended. Einstein's theory of relativity is by no means simple by ordinary standards, but it provides the most economical comprehension of all the facts of uniform and accelerated motion. Newton's theory in its original form leaves

out some momentous facts and if it is emended it becomes as cumbersome as the Ptolemaic hypothesis of cycles and epicycles which the Copernican view replaced. Even Huxley's monism is obviously not as simple as the old-fashioned materialism which made consciousness some sort of secretion of the brain: whatever advantage over that crude philosophy it has is due to its embracing the "irreducible" fact of mind without bringing in dualism or pluralism. The scientific findings of modern times create the need of a grand synthesis in which this monism would be brought into accord with realities other than and distinct from a world-stuff which is indivisibly though not indistinguishably material-mental.

The four European thinkers of our generation who have built up philosophical systems containing a more or less explicit recognition of this monism have not come authentically near such a synthesis. Bertrand Russell with his view that ultimate reality is neither mental nor material but neutral in respect of these alternatives reckons not at all with a life or mind existing and functioning beyond its material companion: he is in spite of his technical non-materialism a materialist for all practical purposes, believing in "blind" cosmic evolutionary forces that have engendered in man a strange briefly brilliant exception who in his high hours strives after truth and beauty and goodness and holiness. Lloyd Morgan, affirming that there are not two realms, a physical and a psychical, but one psycho-physical from top to bottom, and expounding the theory of "emergent evolution" according to which novel values display themselves at certain stages of the psycho-physical world, values not reducible to the lower components of a stage and having an effective unity as well as a purposive law of their own—Lloyd Morgan has a strong though vague sense of some greatness which is universally enfolded and progressively unfolded, but he cannot give proper form to his sense and remains, as far as intellectual terms are concerned, within the confines of a noble naturalism. Samuel Alexander, who considers mind as being in our experience a "continuum" of conscious acts while from the scientific standpoint it is a "continuum" of neural motions in the brain and who suggests a basic reality for this two-sided monism by broadly naming time as the "mind" of space, is more deeply haunted than his scientific-philosophic contemporaries by the presence of something godlike surpassing the body-mind status of man in general and reads in the universe a "*nisus* towards deity" from its vey foundational stuff of "space-time". But "deity" is always becoming, always yet to be: the universe is never complete and new qualities keep on emerging as the patterns of nature's conditions change. Hence, though the next emergent after the present human consciousness may reasonably be supposed to be a quality higher than it, it cannot be understood within Alexander's system as anything independent of our universe's stuff of space-time.

Neither can it be conceived within that system as originally distinct from that stuff.

A.C. Whitehead, the acutest and subtlest enemy of what he terms "bifurcation of nature" and therefore of the body-mind dualism, speaks not only of all constituents of reality being implicative of one another by "prehension", a mutual taking into account or "sensitiveness" or "feeling", which objectively seen is the interrelatedness of the material world: he speaks also of each creature having a "prehension" into the "togetherness" of the universe and into "the principle of concretion" turning universal possibility into universal actuality—a "prehension" into what is identified by Whitehead as God. God is further designated not merely as the abstract "ground of concreteness" but also as concrete in every concretion, each "temporal occasion" embodying him. Finally, God is regarded as more than "a multiplicity of actual components in process of creation": he is, in addition, one, since the fulfilment of his "consequent" as distinguished from his "primordial" nature is a single consciousness and "the realisation of the actual world in the unity of his nature". There is evidently in Whitehead a desire to come somehow to terms with religion and mysticism no less than with science, but it is often difficult to separate his keen complexity from ingenious obscurity and, while he is frequently profound as well as large-visioned, it is doubtful whether he comes really to grips with whatever exceeds the unbifurcated nature on which his philosophy is founded. Religion and mysticism, familiar with experience of soul and God and the Absolute or of planes beyond the material-vital-mental world-stuff, cannot rest in the "first and last things" posited by him, things which appear to be great spiritual truths glimmering through subtle words but which fail to convince us that they are anything else than wonderful mirages created by verbal affinities of a semi-poetic philosophising to the "mantras" of the rishis and saints. Nor can the parapsychological discoveries of present-day science in its unorthodox activity be satisfactorily attuned to Whitehead's philosophy.

There are other names in contemporary European thought that provide more direct approaches to what is here left too metaphysicised away or else inadequately metaphysicised. Bergson is perhaps the most notable: he has brought in his later works his earlier "Durée" and "Élan Vital" and "Intuition" or "In-feeling" into significant touch with the data of mystical experience. But there is not yet precisely the grand synthesis called for by the findings of science. Bergson is the philosopher of life: neither matter nor mind exists for him in quite its own rights.

At this point, apropos of Bergson in particular, we may mention that the grand synthesis of which we have spoken involves also two "stresses" without which a philosophy of the scientific age would be incomplete. One is with

regard to further evolution. Of course the idea of evolution, which is at white heat in Bergson though a kindling force too in Llyod Morgan, Alexander and Whitehead, is the central dynamic of all modern thought playing round the word "Progress". Man is the product of evolution and, by his highly awakened consciousness, he is the supreme spearhead of the evolutionary movement in the future: that is a recurrent theme. However, man does not ordinarily realise his role; nor do the exponents of Progress gauge their theme's full sense. There is in man a large drive towards comfort and pleasure, a considerable straining towards making organised use of whatever capacities are present, a degree of endeavour to develop these capacities, a small amount of push towards evoking new ones and a very limited *nisus* towards surpassing himself and practically no explicit urge towards evolving a new species out of the human. But evolution in the true scientific sense means exactly the last three activities—or, rather, the very last with the other two as contributory factors.

When the theory of evolution was first established, something of this its true sense was caught up in a poetically inspired though not profound or even quite coherent manner by Nietzsche with his cry that man is to be surpassed and that he is only a bridge between the ape and the superman. Nietzsche was under the spell of the materialistic evolutionism of his day, with its cult of struggle for existence and survival of the fittest: he concentrated and intensified this cult into what he termed the Will to Power. The superman signifies in the Nietzschean vision a colossalisation of individualism, his highest virtue an inexhaustible heroic zest, magnificently pitiless to whoever stands in his way as well as to whatever in himself makes for weakness and wistfulness, inertia and complacency, security and luxury. Further, this bright brutality turns a face of flint towards the religious yearning after a Beyond: living and thinking matter is all in all to it. In the last fifty years evolutionism has moved considerably away from the Nietzschean vision. Though it has still a materialistic undertone to many of its pronouncements and though not all biologists subscribe to a non-materialistic philosophy, the Darwinian theme of "Nature red in tooth and claw" has given place to a more subtle and complex understanding of natural selection: indeed, according to Julian Huxley, sanguinary competition is now held to be mostly an anti-evolutionary force, the main part assigned to natural selection being an effect on what is labelled as "differential fertility" among populations, a peaceful working within a web of variation and mutation in the germ-plasm's pattern of chromosomes and genes. Besides, World War II has thrown into frightful relief an actual approximation to the Nietzschean dream in the *Herrenvolk* of Hitler and today other forms of that Titanism are also about us to shake our senses into vivid realisation of its mortal danger to all evolutionary hopes.

A finer and less egoistic strain is observable in recent evolutionism, and the individual is shown values like "sublimation" and "integration of personality" as beacon-lights: even an indirectly religious colour is introduced by the psycho-analytic therapy *à la* Jung. Psychoanalysis has also served to emphasise the subjective side of man, if often only in an endeavour to rid him of too much preoccupation with subjective states. Its most suggestive contribution to thought is Jung's concept of the "collective unconscious", which approaches the old mystical notion of the *Anima Mundi*, the World-Soul, and whose most natural association is with the hypothesis stimulated by the discoveries of the parapsychologists that establish the existence of a mind independent of matter and of space and time as known in the material cosmos, a mind also capable of affecting matter without a physical intermediary. And as the statistically indicated concept of this mind is one of the master-ideas of twentieth-century science, modern evolutionism must be, on the positive side, plumbed for its full significance through that concept. The general direction of the evolutionary movement is to be read in this concept's light. Also the general method of the movement begins then to take shape. For, while science has made an external approach which is extremely valuable in an age when the scientific motif is predominant, what it has proved is something internal—a mysterious psychological transcendence of the physical world. And only through the internal and psychological, through a looking by the human personality into itself, through some sort of direct subjective exploration or evocation of the *abyssus humanae conscientiae*, through a kind of intense inner rapport with layers of being which exceed the normal focus of consciousness, the next evolutionary step can fundamentally be taken.

Yes, the fundamental of further evolution—of man's self-surpassing—is demonstrated to be within. A semi-mysticism is definitely indicated as inherent in the evolution-stress that is characteristic of modern science. Among contemporary European philosophers who have handled the evolutionary theme, Bergson whom we noted to have been most intensely charged with the idea of evolution is also the one who has best realised the inward nature of the method by which contact with the true springs of progress can be made. His account of the method may have defects, and his tendency to dissociate altogether the intellectual consciousness from it may be criticised, but with his "Intuition" or "In-feeling" he does point in the right direction.

Unfortunately, as we have already remarked, he fails to take sufficient cognisance of matter no less than of mind as distinct from life: especially matter is put by him under some sort of cloud. In this he is not merely reactive in a healthy way against the dogmatic materialism of the nineteenth century: he is also open to the suspicion of being crypto-Christian, most probably without

intention or even awareness at the outset. Perhaps, in this business of looking down on matter, we should not single out Christianity: Bergson was crypto-Christian simply because Christianity is the religion of Europe, but all religion in general has depreciated matter and turned man's eyes to a Heaven or a Nirvana or a Sat-chit-ananda annulling the cosmos. Even the most dynamic types of religion have thought in terms of complete fulfilment elsewhere after a life of considerable God-manifestation here. It is not surprising, therefore, that evolutionists who are not inclined to materialism still take colour from a "supra-terrestrial" outlook fostered by past masters of mysticism and spirituality. They may be modern enough in not picturing the human body as the Devil's own trap of sin and a bagatelle of dirty dust which the soul must wait eagerly to throw away, they may even advocate a healthy balance between it and the soul, yet by its very materiality it does seem to them an obstacle in the final view. They do not perceive that if evolution is the law of life the permanent departure to a supra-terrestrial plane of self-completion robs this law of its central meaning: there must be, if we think in terms of self-completion, a supremely satisfying achievement on the earth-plane which is the stage of evolution: the line of progress must not come to an abrupt terminus, with whatever is more than the world-stuff escaping beyond it and leaving the material-vital-mental nature of this stuff unperfected, dropped behind as cankered with some irremediable minimum of imperfection that no evolutionary advance can remove.

Here comes the second of our two stresses: it is with regard to matter's role in further evolution. Materialism was indeed shallow from an all-round standpoint and the dethronement of its one-sided conception of things was both inevitable and desirable; but it caught hold of the central meaning of evolution by insisting that there should be fulfilment on the material scene. Of course, it hardly knew what true fulfilment implies: it had too "extravert" a bent; still, it has had immense value inasmuch as it brought about vast amelioration of physical conditions on the collective no less than the individual scale and a sense at the same time of the body's actual rights and its ideal potentialities. Even its exaggeration of bodily values at the expense of less tangible ones has a significant truth concealed in it. Although the world-stuff is vital and mental as well as material, it does have a predominant material aspect: matter is, as it were, its matrix-aspect and life and mind are its aspects as "emergents" and that is why life and mind, in spite of being not really confined to the "emergent" status and of being also "independents", have an uphill fight to wage in vitalising and mentalising matter. Evolution, therefore, must signify a superb efflorescence of matter as its goal of goals. No doubt, matter's efflorescence must be as perfect instrument of the subtler

powers and splendours of life and mind and beyond-mind; but all these would negate the evolutionary law unless they worked for that perfect instrumentality and brought about matter's own consummation.

It is thus that the new mysticism, into which the philosophy of science—the monism-in-pluralism outlined by us—grows, does not need to reject anything really valuable in the past of religion but puts into all ancient spiritual values a mighty this-worldly meaning by assimilating the significances and stresses of scientific thought and discovery. Yet vainly in the homeland of science, the West, do we seek for a consistent conceptual formulation, at once ample and detailed, of the mystical world-view half compelled and half permitted by that discovery and that thought. Only from India has come the satisfying formulation as part of a system of thought and discovery wider than the scientific: it is to be found in that masterpiece of intellectual and spiritual inspiration, Sri Aurobindo's book *The Life Divine*. Here a gigantic mystical experience which reaches from the splendid realisations of traditional spirituality to a consummate grip on what they left vaguely visioned is laid out in a vast yet minutely built philosophical pattern by means of a logic both firm and supple, coping with the abstract and the concrete of many planes of knowledge. Here is the outlook of one who has not only explored reality in its depths and heights but kept in living touch with modern ideas and needs. For, Sri Aurobindo was educated in England and the period of his stay there between his seventh to his twenty-first year (1879-1893) fell within some of the most keen decades of scientific development. Materialism was at its acme and was fixing ineradicably in the consciousness of the times the concept of universal evolution and the feeling of earth-life's centrality in the scheme of man's fulfilment. Sri Aurobindo, on his return to India, prophesied that the materialistic denial of the extra-sensory and the mystical would break down by the very force of its own narrowness, but he always appreciated the austere discipline, fostered by scientific materialism, of emotion-free intellect which insists on putting everything to rigorous test and he set an extreme value on the materialist's cry for tangible results of all endeavour and for building by evolution upon *terra firma* whatever heaven the dreamer sees among the clouds. By what he criticised and what he approved he went to the heart of the scientific adventure, cleansing it of all adventitious dogmatism and making its essential integrity and clarity and progressive this-worldliness one with his insatiable hunger for the Eternal, the Infinite, the Divine. It is this rare union of the scientific and the spiritual that finds voice in the book we have mentioned and renders the philosophy of Integral Yoga expounded in its pages the most fitting subject with which to crown a scientific survey opening up far beyond materialism.

To be Continued.

K.D. SETHNA

MAN, ANGEL AND GOD:

Rainer Maria Rilke's Poetic Vision and its Significance

I

WHEN Orpheus raised his whole self into his voice and began to sing it was the song of his soul with which he gripped men, animals and the dead. He sang what he himself was and, as all existence swayed in him, feelable and inward, all could become through him pure song. It has not been recorded whether he knew about his secret, about the overcoming of Nature in his own heart which united him with the Divine. But his song testifies that he did live out such self-exceeding into the deepest inwardness of the soul. And what else is this song except the revelation of the Orphic spirit, an ever-flowing fountain spurting up from the being to a continual new-becoming; as the fulfilment of a truly human nature shaping itself towards perfection under the inmost assent of the heart? It is because Orpheus was so purely, so deeply man that those who named themselves men, yet knew not what the name signified, worshipped him as a god.

To Rilke also he was a god, as he fulfilled this being-human in its essentiality for which the poet strove life-long. He is the ensouled symbol, the shining goal of Rilke's personal striving for realisation. And thus Rilke himself becomes an announcer of true existence—a summoner to real humanhood. The "little rust-coloured sail of the sonnets to Orpheus" which were "written down in one single breathless obedience between the 2nd and 5th of February 1922 without any word having been in doubt or having needed to be changed" "feasted" this mode of being, this active consciousness that man "dwells poetically", as Holderlin has said. But what is it that happens in the poem? How does it come about that this occurrence of saying and singing concerns man so essentially?

At the outer margin of true being goes on the "Here-ing", as Rilke puts it—the field of unreal man. "Here all is distance", seeming "possession" and "fate." The surroundings step back into a great distance and, even if we place them in our proximity and press them against our own body, we cannot win them for ourselves. They remain far from us by that distance which separates us from our own inner being. Therefore they can never become a possession

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to us. But instead of this holding and preservation, it may happen that we once become aware of the relatedness which joins us with all worlds in a deeper layer of our being. "Instead of possession one learns the relatedness"—the relatedness to something more essential, the relatedness into a greater unit. And at last fate: is it really something properly human, this "being confronted and nothing but this and always confronted"? Must we be "always turned towards the creation", "spectators always, everywhere ...and [can we] never get out? It overfills us. We arrange it. It falls to pieces. We arrange it again and ourselves decay."

We never have, not on a single day,
the pure space before us in which the flowers
infinitely unfold. Always it is world,
and never No-where without Nought: the Pure
Unwatched that one breathes and
infinitely *knows*, and desires not.

Does not this "pure space", of which there is already so much known, contain in itself a new, more real life-possibility? In what relation do we find ourselves to it whose superiorities shadow the world?

Through all beings extends one single space:
World-inner-space.

A deeper region opens to the "Here-ing", a new dimension, the essential one, of the deepness of being. There is, if this "pure inner space" can be understood as a comprehensive whole, a unity to which every existence is related, in which "the flowers infinitely unfold", in which the animal, superior herein to man, sees everything "and itself in everything and healed for ever" and which to the "loving ones", if there "would not be the other who blocks the view", is "as though by mistake...opened behind the other".

Rilke has given many names to his vision. It is for him the "deep being", the "open", the "averted side of life", the "other relatedness", the "free" whose mirroring is the creation,—the "unsayable". He has experienced this inner space, "when the call of a bird outside and in his¹ own inwardness was there in accord, while it in a certain manner did not break at the border of his body, [but] took both together to an uninterrupted space in which, secretly protected, remained only one single place of purest deepest consciousness...and from all

¹ Rilke, in this experience and in the next, speaks in the third person.

sides the Infinite passed into him so intimately that he might believe he felt the soft resting of the stars, which had entered in the meantime, within his breast." At another time he was leaning on a tree in the garden of the castle of Duino, it was to him "as if from inside the tree almost unnoticeable vibrations passed into him...he thought he had never been filled with softer movements, his body was in some manner treated as a soul and put into a condition to receive a degree of influence which by the normal concreteness of bodily circumstances could properly not have been sensed....Attempting to give himself always an account, especially of the softest, he asked himself urgently what was happening there to him and well-nigh immediately found an expression which satisfied him, speaking to himself: he had come to the other side of nature....Everywhere and always more equal-filled with a crowd reappearing in strange inward intervals, his body became indescribably heart-felt and only useful to stand there in him pure and careful...Slowly looking around himself...he recognised everything, remembered it...[knew] that he had only *returned* to all this here."

This "open", "pure" being, "averted from life", is for Rilke the home of the "dead", whose existence is "laborious and full of retrieval, that one may slowly feel a little eternity". But everything depends on "reading the word 'death' *without* negation. Like the moon, life has just as certainly a permanent aspect averted from us, which is *not* its opposite but its complement of perfection, the completeness of the real, the healed and the full sphere and ball of *being*. One should not be afraid that one's force would not be sufficient to bear any death-experience, be it the next, the most terrible; death is not *beyond* our power, it is the scale-mark at the top of the vessel: we are *full* as often as we reach it and being full means (for us) being heavy¹...this is all." Rilke is only concerned with the unity of all being. "Our effort (this has become to me ever more clear with the years, and my work perhaps has only this *one* significance and mission, to give witness, impartial and independent,...seerlike perhaps if that does not sound too proud,...of this insight which overwhelms me often so unexpectedly), ...our effort, I mean, can *only* tend towards presupposing the *unity* of life and death, so that it may prove itself in us little by little....Life always says at once: Yes and No. He, death, (I conjure you to believe it.) is the proper Yes-sayer. He says *only*: Yes. Before eternity." "*Life-and-Death-confirmation proves to be one....To admit the one without the other [is]...finally a limitation excluding all the infinite....we must try to labour at the greatest consciousness of our being which is at home in both limitless spheres, inexhaustibly nourished by both....The true life-figure extends through both spheres, the blood of the greatest circular course flows through both: there is neither a Here*

¹ The German word "schwer" means both "heavy" and "depressed".

nor a Beyond but the great Unity.... We the here-ers and today-ers are not satisfied for a single moment in the time-world, more bound in it; we constantly pass over and over to the earlier ones, to our origin and to those who seem to come after us. In that greatest 'open' world, *are* all, one cannot say 'at once', because just the falling away of time conditions that they all *are*. The transitoriness plunges everywhere into a deep being. And so all configurations of the Here-ing are not only to be used in a time-limited way, but, as far as we are able, to be placed in those superior significances in which we share." "So outspread the 'Outward' is, it bears with all its sidereal distances hardly a comparison with the dimensions, *with the depth-dimension of our inward* which does not even need the spaciousness of the universe to be in itself well-nigh immeasurable. When therefore the dead, when therefore the future ones need an abode, *which* refuge should be more agreeable and more offered than this imaginative space? It presents itself to me more and more, as if our current consciousness were inhabiting the apex of a pyramid, whose base in us ..goes so completely into breadth that the further we see ourselves able to let ourselves down into it, the more generally we appear to be related into the given-ness of the earthly, of the, in the largest conception, *worldly* being which is independent of time and space. I have felt since my earliest youth the presumption (and I too have, where I was sufficient for that, lived according to it), that in a deeper layer of this consciousness-pyramid the simple *being* could become an event to us, that inviolably present and being at once of all that which is at the upper 'normal' apex of the self-consciousness only permitted to be experienced as 'succession'."

Behind the "Here-ing" the inwardness has opened itself. There "it's real" and essential; and into this essentiality all our roots are reaching; from it we are "inexhaustibly nourished". "For our own heart surpasses us still". To become conscious of this inner world, to include it ever more knowingly and actively into our own "being-here", is for Rilke a most urgent demand. For he recognises that from there his "action grows out", the creation,—the Singing. Therefore it is necessary to be at home in "both limitless spheres". Only then the "Infinite passes from all sides so intimately" over into us, that we experience even the farthest and most foreign as our own. This is, so Rilke knows, reachable through the perfection of feeling. Which feeling? Certainly not the vitalistic whose proper nature it is to be imperfect and to swing between the opposites of aversion and adoration, hate and love, suffering and joy, desperation and hope. It exists only between the poles of antithetical extremes. Outside of these tensions alone can the perfection take place and not till it has accomplished a certain unconditionedness will it be possible to overcome harmoniously the polarity from within. Hence the perfection must be realised in a still more inward region of our being, a region which, although not named

by Rilke, one finds to be presupposed by many of his utterances, insofar as his words carry it in themselves and their contents point us to it. Without accepting its absolute significance so spontaneously and securely that nothing bars the revelation of an immediate relatedness between it and the poetic expression, it is impossible to do justice to the depth-meaning of Rilke's work, and every attempt to understand the poet, wherever all depended for him on the expression of the last profundity possible to him, is condemned to fall short of the poetic vision. This region is the Soul, a third depth of being in whose in-standing intensification the absolute meaning of man fulfils itself. Beyond the "world-inner-space", at the bottom of the "consciousness-pyramid", all existence passes over into a state pure and without contradiction, which unifies in itself all opposites. Beyond heaven and hell there is a pure nameless Being to whom the soul belongs as an eternal part. Here in the essential Self of man, whose quality is experienced at first in feeling, reigns that undisturbable peace which alone makes the perfection of the vitalistic nature possible. To become conscious of this Self is a first step towards real humanhood; to live it constantly, its fulfilment. Therefore Orpheus had appeared to men as god: his existence accomplished itself out of this divine part of his being, which they did not know. He was the poet of his soul whose visions he sang. Like all pure real poetry, his songs were the expression of a most inward seeing. Through the senses a thing of delight may set aflame the Soul deep in us. But the Soul, which has before it not only the world of our images but, from the unconscious up into the highest superconscious, the whole immeasurable region of the "world-inner-space" where things unveil their true being, where they are related one to another through the entire reality of their universal existence, —the Soul urges the delighted one to say and to sing its vision, the essence of that which sublimely steered our senses—

Between the hammers endures
our heart, as the tongue
between the teeth remains
still the praiser.

Rilke's later poems, especially his sonnets and elegies, are an Orphic chant. He was, the moment in which he created them, truly Man. For, in this we prove ourselves—that the soul should determine our action and that the ego should learn to serve our Soul. "Song is existence," because it wells forth from the heart, and because existence is "the constant pure exchange of one's own being for world-space", the "counterbalance" of my own heart, "in which I happen rhythmically". For this exchange, this constant becoming and unbe-

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coming, which is the fate of my whole outer personality happening before the soul, can only accomplish itself "purely" if it happens according to the most inward laws without my trying to direct it by a wilful striving. It should be like the "breathing" that I let happen to me, because I intuit a deeper consciousness which controls it. Rilke's poetry is the invocation to man to pass over behind his fate into his soul, to be there alive from his self, his most inward being and to sing, to announce this being-there.

(To be continued)

JOBST MÜHLING

BOOKS IN THE BALANCE

Flame-Waves by *Chinmoy Ghose*, Publishers: Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry. Pp. 42 Price Re 1/ with a Frontpiece of Sri Aurobindo.

This is a small collection of poems by a young man of 24 who is primarily an ardent spiritual seeker. Every poem breathes the purity and sincerity of his aspiration and prompts in the reader a kindred flame-wave, that mounts high. What strikes one more than anything else is that he has not merely striven to soar in the higher planes but has also brought back some of the most precious boons of that realm. For instance in his poem *Immortality* he says:

Though in the world, I am above its woe;
I dwell in an ocean of supreme release.
My mind, a core of the One's unmeasured thoughts,
The star-vast welkin hugs my Spirit's peace.

The poem opens with lines which indicate that the author is not without a genuine spiritual experience:

I feel in all my limbs His boundless Grace;
Within my heart the Truth of life shines white.
The secret heights of God my soul now climbs;
No dole, no sombre pang, no death in my sight.

However, the third line to my mind seems unnecessarily inverted; perhaps 'My soul now climbs the secret heights of God' might have been more straightforward and effective, yet the experience bodied forth here is powerful and shows that he is truly of those about whom he says, 'We are the stoic sons of the fire-pure way.'

He has also passed through the dark night of the soul and in his poem *Struggle's Gloom* vividly describes the passage through the morass and darkness and blank sorrow which every seeker of the path has to tread. Art, says Herbert Read, is the child of the period of struggle and torment and tension of the soul. Though one cannot lend countenance to this view whole-heartedly because there is the finest poetry in the Vedas and in our own times Sri Aurobindo has written the greatest poems that sing the glories of the spiritual summits, yet it cannot

be denied that the touch of things mortal and the pangs of life have brought forth tear-drops more precious than pearls. *Struggle's Gloom* stands out as one of Chinmoy's best poems.

By way of general criticism it may be said that on occasion there are some awkward terms in his work such as:

No more can ruin me matter's frown.

When he writes:

I hear the Hymn that bars decay
And makes my bosom ever green
With faith and ardent inmost call,
I have become the Freedom-Sheen,

one is not quite sure that the last word has not been dictated merely by the exigency of rhyme. But perhaps here the suspicion of an unsure handling of words is allayed by the suggestion of some inner light into which one rises or plunges and by which one breaks all human bondage and mortal ignorance.

The poems on the whole are the utterance of an inspired poet and bring us in contact with a high-flaming soul full of sweetness and fervour and open to the wideness of Divine Love. They should be read by all those who are straining their eyes for a vision of the heights. This poetry is also an index of the new turn in the spiral of English poetry.

RAVINDRA KHANNA

Sri Aurobindo Mandir Annual Jayanti Number XIV 15th August, 1955
Publishers: *Sri Aurobindo Pathamandir* 15 College Square, Calcutta Price Paper Rs. 3/8 Cloth Rs 4/8 Pp. 93 with two Frontispiece photos of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother.

Sri Aurobindo Mandir Annual appears once a year on the birthday of Sri Aurobindo which falls on the 15th of August. It provides its readers with a rich fare sufficient for many months, containing some important writings of Sri Aurobindo's on various subjects. There are also some talks and writings of the Mother which throw a vivid light on the innumerable problems that beset the life of a spiritual seeker. We also begin to know with a dawning sense of reality how those permanent problems which we go on shelving hold also the keys to the solution of our immediate temporal problems. One says with a sense of relief, "Happy is the man who knows the causes of things."

The Annual this year opens with a complete and revised translation of the Kena Upanishad. Sri Aurobindo often revised his translations of the ancient scriptures in order to bring out all the mantric power of the original: the revelatory sound vibrations and rhythmic energy and harmonious blending of vowels and consonants the ancients were so particular about. There is also a very concise but illuminating commentary on the verses of the above Upanishad by M. P. Pandit, searching out all the symbolism which makes them so obscure to the non-initiates. There is also a very poetic translation of some of the verses of the Kural (a celebrated work in Tamil by the poet Tiruvaluvar). One is struck by the spiritual ardour, depth and sweet devotion of the poet. Here are two couplets:

Not to the feet arriving of the one with whom none can compare,
 Hard from the heart to dislodge is its sorrow.
 Not to the feet of the Seer, to the sea of righteousness coming,
 Hard to swim is the different ocean.

Those who have trodden the difficult path of Yoga will leap at the deep truth contained in the above lines; for, without the grace of the guru very little can be achieved. Then there is a short poem *Rain*. I give two couplets of this also;

The world cannot live without its waters,
 Nor conduct be at all without the rains from heaven.
 If one drop from heaven falls not, here
 Hardly shalt thou see one head of green grass peering.

There are many unpublished letters of Sri Aurobindo appearing here for the first time: on the Mother, on Sadhana, on the Psychic and Love and on symbols: on dreams and visions, and then general. I give below some extracts.

“The Brahmic condition brings a negative peace of shanti and mukti in the soul. Self-giving brings a positive freedom which can become also a dynamic force of action in the nature.”

“The Gayatri mantra is the mantra for bringing the light of Truth into all the planes of the being.”

“Let the peace and self-giving increase till it takes hold also of the parts in which there are imperfections and gets rid of them. As for the imperfections, it is right not to be troubled by them—only one has to be conscious of them and have the steady and quiet will that they should go.”

This advice is typically Aurobindonian—to remain unperturbed even when the darkest things surge up from the subconscious parts. Some thinkers appear to have a similar attitude—for instance, Goethe who remarked, “Impatience won’t do, still less will remorse! The first makes old sins worse, the second

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breeds new”—but “the steady and quiet will” that Sri Aurobindo recommends is not merely a directly positive addition but also part of a more potent process, the soul’s surrendering approach to the Divine; of this process those thinkers take insufficient stock and hence their advice, though psychologically healthy, lacks a pointer to the true outgrowing of one’s lower nature.

Sri Aurobindo’s literary appreciations of Kalidasa are well-known and here is another exquisite article full of insight into the social and political background in which the genius of the great poet flowered. Sri Aurobindo also portrays the different race-features in the sub-continent of India.

The Mother’s talks lay stress on the importance of the physical body for not only spiritual progress but every kind of development of the human personality.

Then there are very scholarly, profound and subtly argumentative articles by Nolini Kanta Gupta, M. P. Pandit, Rishabhchand and S. K. Maitra.

RAVINDRA KHANNA

METAPHYSICS NOTES

II. REALITY AND EXISTENCE

IN the last chapter we saw that in Philosophy we do not pass from ignorance to knowledge, but from implicit to explicit knowledge. In Philosophy nothing new comes to be known: what is sought to be known is already known, it is only sought to be known better. Hence it is possible in Philosophy and in Philosophy alone, to know what we seek to know in the very attempt to define the nature and significance of the inquiry. In Science we come to know more and more about our subject-matter by addition from without; there is a continual increase in our information about things through a growth of experience, and this is so because in Science it cannot be said, in any sense, that we already knew what we have come to know through scientific inquiry. Scientific knowledge does not lie in our minds waiting to be brought to birth by a dialectical process; it is given to us from outside our minds and is never felt to be the result of a compulsion laid on our rational nature from within. As such, scientific knowledge remains incurably contingent.

Increase in philosophical knowledge on the other hand consists in the deepening of the philosophical consciousness itself. Philosophy is an inward discipline in self-recollection, accompanied by a progressive clarification of the image of Reality cast in the mirror of reflection. The image is and must be seized as a whole and not in parts, for Reality is essentially indivisible and therefore must be grasped in its wholeness or not at all. The unity of Reality cannot be adequately represented as a whole of parts. Any object less than Reality may be either wholly or partly present, or may be known either as a whole or in parts, precisely because it is an incomplete thing and so completeness is not essential to its being. It can therefore be composed of parts, each part being merely less complete than the whole. But Reality is the Infinite and therefore completeness is of its essence. It cannot be present partially or be known in part, for partiality is by its very nature a negation of the Infinite. Even when what is known is an aspect of Reality, the integral Reality must be present indivisibly in the aspect which is known. If the Infinite is present anywhere, either in existence or in thought, it must be indivisibly present, for indivisible being is what we mean by the term Infinite.

Since the image of Reality is perceived as a whole, philosophical reflection

consists in clarifying the image by bringing it into clearer focus, in the same way in which a perspective seen through a pair of field glasses at first appears blurred and gradually acquires form and outline and finally stands out as a clear picture as we go on adjusting the instrument.

PHILOSOPHY AND MATHEMATICS

We have distinguished Science from Philosophy by saying that answers to scientific questions come from without, while answers to philosophical problems are contained within the inquiry itself. This distinction, it may be said, is valid if we consider only the empirical or inductive sciences, which by their very nature have to rely on external observation as their most important source of knowledge; but we seem to have overlooked the deductive or mathematical sciences in which the conclusions are independent of sense observation and appear to be reached *a priori* by a method similar to, if not identical with, that of Metaphysics. In Mathematics as in Metaphysics we seem to draw out answers from our own minds and our conclusions, unlike the conclusions of the empirical sciences, are not contingent or merely probable but necessary, since they are demonstrated to be true without a shadow of doubt. In the *Phaedo*, Socrates attempts to demonstrate the dialectical method by taking a problem in geometry and undertaking to deliver the mind of an illiterate boy of mathematical truths which he had not explicitly perceived.

We must therefore justify our assertion that it is the distinctive character of Philosophy to obtain all its answers from within as categorical imperatives. There is an unmistakable difference between the method of Metaphysics and that of Mathematics which Socrates overlooked, but which Plato saw very clearly and which he expounded in the *Republic*. Socrates was introducing a confusion when he chose a problem in Mathematics to illustrate his great discovery of the philosophical method. His doctrine of Reminiscence, that knowledge is recollection, is true of philosophical knowledge alone, and not of scientific or mathematical knowledge. The main difference between Metaphysics and Mathematics is that a metaphysical conclusion is arrived at as the necessary presupposition of the inquiry into the problem itself. The answer lies in the question, for it is the Reality presupposed by the question which makes the question at all possible. In the language of the Schoolmen, Reality or, more directly, our implicit belief in Reality is the *ratio essendi* of our philosophical inquiry into the nature of Reality while the inquiry itself is the *ratio cognoscendi* of the existence of Reality, and of the possession of our minds of an implicit belief in Reality. In contrast to Philosophy, mathematical knowledge is not

arrived at by asking what Mathematics is, nor are solutions to mathematical problems contained as postulates in the inquiry into these problems. Mathematics in this respect is not different from the inductive sciences. Its questions are open questions and its conclusions are not foregone. The object of mathematical thinking, however we may represent it, is known directly and not indirectly through reflection on the nature of mathematical thinking, whereas in Metaphysics, as we have seen, Ontology, i.e. reflection on Reality, presupposes Epistemology, i.e. reflection on the concept of Metaphysics. Mathematics no doubt differs from the empirical sciences in that its conclusions are not dependent on experience, but it does not follow that an answer which does not come from experience must be found to be implicitly contained in the question. It could still be external to the question as in fact it is in the case of Mathematics. The difference between Mathematics and Metaphysics may be stated thus:— Mathematics is the analysis of the implications of certain axioms applied to a concept, e.g. a triangle, while Metaphysics is the introspective awareness of the presuppositions of all thinking. When for example we try to determine the nature of a triangle, the properties of a triangle are found to be contained implicitly in the definition of a triangle, but they are not presupposed in the question ‘What is the nature of a triangle?’ To obtain the answer we have to concentrate not on the question about the triangle, but on the concept of the triangle.

It follows from this that, however demonstrative mathematical propositions may be, mathematical thinking remains essentially hypothetical. Its conclusions are not inevitable in the sense of being necessary postulates of thought, but only in the sense of following necessarily from certain axioms and definitions. These axioms and definitions presuppose experience of a certain sort, e.g. experience of Space; and whatever view we may hold of our knowledge of Space, whether we say that it is given to us in experience, like other objects, or that it is, as Kant held, an *a priori* form of sense, we cannot assert that the existence of Space is a postulate of thought. Mathematics in this respect is like any other science. Its subject matter is given to it from outside and is therefore contingent. We cannot know the properties of a triangle by asking what is presupposed in the question which the mathematician asks concerning the triangle. It is true that Mathematics, or rather Geometry, presupposes Space but this does not mean that the subject-matter of Mathematics is internal to mathematical thinking. It would have been so if mathematical thinking had been categorical, and it could be shown to be categorical only if it is true that the denial that there is a science of Mathematics itself presupposes Mathematics in the sense that the denial is made possible only through a process of thinking which is itself mathematical. We are, however, compelled to recognise the

categorical nature of philosophical thinking, for the denial of philosophy is itself an unsuccessful attempt to think philosophically.

THE CONCEPT OF THE REAL

We have seen that the subject matter of Philosophy is Reality which is the Infinite. We must now come to see this better or clarify further the concept of Reality. What do we mean when we say that something is real or that something is not real? The distinction between what is real or what really exists and what only seems to be real or what is only an appearance is made not only in Philosophy but also in Science. It is a distinction familiar even to common sense and is in fact a necessary presupposition of all thinking about anything whatever.

Now, while scientific thinking assumes the distinction between the real and the apparent, it is not its business to question or explain further the significance of the distinction that it makes. Philosophical thinking also rests on the distinction between Reality and Appearance but Philosophy cannot be content to let this distinction remain a mere assumption. Its task is to inquire what we mean by Reality and what we mean by calling anything Appearance. We must not only understand and explain how these notions are used in Science and common sense but also what ultimately we mean by these terms. The significance of this all-pervasive distinction between Reality and Appearance cannot be fully understood at the level of scientific knowledge. It can only be adequately comprehended at the level of philosophical reflection. We have seen that philosophical thinking which is categorical presupposes Reality conceived as the Infinite. Scientific thinking also presupposes Reality, but not immediately. Scientific thinking is hypothetical or conditional. This means that in Science we think under self-imposed limitations. The limitations do not belong to thought as such but only to scientific thought.

Hypothetical thinking thus has categorical thinking for its foundation, but the very limitation which makes thought scientific or hypothetical prevents Science from examining its own foundations. In spite of its claims to believe nothing without scrutiny and experimental verification, Science as a body of knowledge rests on the foundation of faith, a fact which may sound strange but which scientists themselves realise and acknowledge. Philosophy which must question all assumptions examines this faith and determines what degree of truth it possesses. Thus the Infinite which is presupposed in philosophical thought is indirectly presupposed by scientific thought since Philosophy is the foundational knowledge to which all other knowledge necessarily points. The difference between the two is that while scientific thinking merely

presupposes the Infinite, philosophical thinking not only presupposes the Infinite but also reflects and reveals it.

We now come to the question:—What is meant by calling something real? We have said that scientific inquiry presupposes the distinction between the real and the apparent, but as Science never examines its own presuppositions it follows that in Science the distinction is merely used but not analysed or understood in all its implications. This means that the question, what is implied in making this distinction between the real and the apparent, is not one which will interest the scientist as such. Nevertheless such a distinction is not meaningless to the scientist because he asks such questions as, Does A exist? Is A really B? The scientist takes his world of experience as the norm of Reality and when he asks whether something is real he means to ask whether that object is such that it can become a part of his world of experience. Thus for example horses are real but centaurs are not, for while we see horses and ride on horses we shall never come across a centaur running down the road or wishing to communicate with us with the human part of itself. Horses are thrust upon us while a centaur or rather the idea of a centaur is held before the mind by an effort of the imagination.

This distinction, however, presupposes that the world of our experience is real and when we ask, as we are bound to, whether it is so and, if so, then real in what sense? we are clearly passing beyond the sphere of Science.

To pass beyond Science is to pass from the world of things or bare facts to the world of purposes and values. Science can use the notion of the real but cannot analyse it because the real is essentially a value concept. Something falls outside the scope of Science, if either it goes beyond the kind of experience on which Science relies for its data or it belongs to the sphere of values. We cannot say that it is for the first reason that Science does not examine the notion of the real for this would mean that in our experience we never came across things which the scientist regards as real. This is obviously not true and so we must conclude that the concept of the real is beyond the grasp of Science not because it is trans-empirical, though it may be that, but because it is a value concept. Thus it is clear that while Science confines its attention to the world of things or facts as such, it can only do so if it necessarily presupposes the world of values. The judgment of mere fact is always an abstraction from the total judgment which is a judgment of value. All thought takes place therefore in the matrix of the value consciousness. It is no more possible for us to get outside the value consciousness, at any rate while we are thinking, than it is for a human body to jump out of its skin. The attempt to do so is suicidal, for the denial that thought is enveloped in the value consciousness is itself a piece of thinking and so presupposes the distinction between the real and the appa-

rent, which distinction, as we have seen, presupposes the value consciousness.

Let us examine what precisely is meant by the distinction between the world of values and the world of things. Our conclusion was that Science describes the nature of things but inasmuch as it aims at the truth about things, it presupposes, though it does not assert, that a thing as such is an abstraction from a total experience, for we must remember that truth is a value. Every judgment implicitly or explicitly asserts that something is or is not as it should be. The standard in reference to which judgments are made may be the standard of truth or of goodness or of beauty, or some other relative standard.

Let us analyse this problem further. Consider the two propositions: 1) Dogs are quadrupeds 2) White swans exist. In the first case the predicate mentions a quality which the subject 'dogs' possesses, but when we affirm existence of white swans, we are not predicating a quality which white swans possess. Existence, as Kant has shown, is not a predicate, for the difference between a real dollar and an imaginary dollar is not that the former possesses an additional quality not possessed by the latter. It would, therefore, be futile to try to explain an existential judgment as such by a scientific analysis of the qualities of the existing object. The guiding and controlling notions of Science are not themselves open to experimental verification. They must become the subject-matter of an inquiry which deals with experience in its concreteness, and not merely with things or facts in their abstraction from experience. By experience I mean that value consciousness through which alone awareness of thinghood or facthood is possible.

What then do we mean when we say that A exists or is real? The judgment, we have seen, is implicitly a value judgment. In this, however, the existential judgment is not in a peculiar case. All judgments are implicitly or explicitly value judgments. This is so because all judgments claim to state facts. An implicit value judgment is either an explicit or an implicit existential judgment. Thus the judgment 'grass is green' is implicitly an existential judgment, since it presupposes the distinction between the real and the apparent, and the existential judgment, we have seen, is implicitly a value-judgment. (An explicit value judgment is atleast an implicit existential judgment, while all metaphysical judgments are explicit judgments both of value and of fact.)

Thus to think is to judge and to judge is to evaluate and to evaluate, we may say, is to bring the object judged into necessary relation with purpose, to reveal it as not just a thing but as a significant thing. The concept of the real is thus determined at two levels; the question is raised first about the reality of the scientific object which in its thinghood, conditioned by the mechanical forces of nature, is only an abstraction from a wider system whose character is teleological. The object or thing is brought into necessary relation with ex-

perience. This, however, does not settle the question concerning the meaning of the term real, but only puts it in its proper perspective. Human experience is by no means self-explaining. Here too we have to sift and discriminate. Our purposes are fragmentary and have to be questioned and their significance understood. This inquiry is undertaken in Philosophy which deals with the world of purposes and values and never with bare facts or things in abstraction from experience.

At the first level the question is about the scientific object, i.e. the object taken in abstraction from a system of purposes which constitute our experience. To say that it is real is precisely to take it out of its isolation and assimilate it with experience. It is not merely something that *is* but something that is significant. It is thus a postulate of our rational nature that the world in which we live, nay, every single item in the universe is alive with significance. Of nothing can we say, except from a limited point of view or in relation to the fragmentary purposes of finite individuals, that it merely is or happens or that it is simply lying about in some portion of the world or the Universe, unnoticed and unhonoured. To make such an assertion absolutely, i.e. as true in the last analysis, is to attempt to climb out of the value consciousness, and confine ourselves to a neutral awareness of things, which we have seen is impossible.

It should be clear, that in asserting that an object enters into a scheme of purposes and becomes part of experience, we are not, even provisionally, bringing the object into necessary relation with the limited experience of finite individuals. There are a countless number of events taking place in the universe which do not in any conceivable way enter directly into relation with the purposive life of any individual, and yet they really happen. This is but natural, since our purposes are fragmentary and relative and, when examined, point to a reality beyond themselves. As they are not self-explaining they cannot explain all things. We may say at the most that every object or event, insofar as it enters into experience, is *continuous* with the experiences of finite individuals, but we cannot say that it is contained in them. Things exist not only whether we perceive them or not but whether we have any use for them or not.

To bring an object into relation with a system of purposes is thus to bring it ultimately into relation with that Reality to which our value consciousness necessarily points. We have therefore to raise the question of the reality of our experiences. The distinction between the real and the apparent breaks out again at a higher level and it must be the task of Philosophy to explain this distinction in terms not of bare facts but of value and significance. To conceive Reality as something merely existing is to approach it from the point of view of Science which, as we have seen, is the result of an abstraction.

If we approach Reality in the value consciousness then it must itself be regarded as a Value. That which is ultimately real, i.e. the Real which is the final presupposition of all thought whatever, must necessarily be conceived as carrying within it the final significance of all existence and experience. Reality in the last resort is simultaneously the Supreme Fact and the Absolute Value. We may describe it as the Significant Whole for it is that Being which in comprehending all things contains and reveals the significance of each.

In the case of the scientific object our question was—‘What is meant by calling it real?’ Whether it is real or not is a problem for Science and Science alone to determine. In Philosophy we must not pronounce a judgment on the question whether centaurs exist or not, but when told that they do not exist we must try to analyse what is meant by affirming or denying existence of anything. In the case of the value experience our question is not merely what is meant by calling it real or unreal but equally, ‘Is it real at all?’ The subject-matter of Philosophy is not things but values, or we may simply say ‘experience’, since all experience is overtly or covertly a value-experience. It is at the level of Philosophy that the problem of determining the significance of the distinction between the real and the apparent arises, since, as we have seen, Science merely forces the problem on us but does not undertake to solve it.

We may then ask—are our experiences real? and further, what is implied in asking such a question? To obtain the right answer we must remain firmly entrenched in the value-consciousness to which our reflection on the presuppositions of Science has raised us; if we slip back into the scientific consciousness then we shall lose touch with concrete experience and once again move about in the shadow-world of abstractions. We must here make an all-important distinction between reality and mere existence. Whatever is real exists, but even the unreal exists; what exists, however, need not necessarily be real, and what does not exist cannot be described as either real or unreal; e.g. centaurs, for the distinction of the real and the unreal applies, as we have seen, not to things, which are abstractions from experience, but to experience itself. Mere existence is a concept intelligible to Science and hence to ask the question, ‘are our experiences real?’, is not the same as to ask the question, ‘do they exist?’ We do not doubt that they exist or take place, that they are not fictions of our imagination, and yet we may raise a question concerning their reality. To ask whether a mode of experience is real implies that we are referring not to its fact-hood viewed in abstraction but to the purpose which it embodies. Our life is a series of experiences each of which not merely happens but is alive with significance and yet the significance of our lives escapes us and the true purpose of our existence is not revealed in the fragmentary and to a large extent incoherent purposes which we seek to realise. The experience of the

individual with its dualities of truth and error, joy and sorrow, good and evil, beauty and ugliness, must awaken in him the consciousness of value and an urge towards the Significant Whole; but these experiences themselves do not satisfy that urge. They raise the problem but do not provide the solution; they are a challenge to that which lies deepest in us to awaken and find that Reality which illumines life, explains the significance of its partial purposes and draws us towards itself as the final consummation of our being. We may thus define Reality as the Significant Whole in which all things seek and find their fulfilment. Reality is that being which is self-luminous in the sense that it explains all things and is itself self-explaining. It has its absolute worth fully in itself and confers value on all things else that are in a relative sense valuable. 'It shining everything else shines', or, in the words of Aristotle, 'God is the object of the world's desire'. The Supreme Reality is also the Supreme Value and as such it is the all in all. It claims our absolute and unconditional allegiance to itself and will give us no rest until we find its light illumining all parts of our being and realise it as constituting the very self of ourselves. Our experiences are not real since they do not carry their worth in themselves; they contain merely flitting sparks of purposiveness and broken arcs of meaning; in Reality alone is the Perfect Round and the Luminous Fire.

This then is the final meaning of the term Reality and of the distinction between Reality and Appearance. Reality is the Significant Whole, in which all stands illumined, reaching which all wounds are healed, all conflicts overcome, and all doubts destroyed. In it is our fulfilment and salvation, the luminous and wholly satisfying explanation of our inescapable sense of purpose and value. 'By its light all else is illumined.'

As Reality is essentially a value-concept, the concept of Appearance must also be determined in terms of value. The term applies not to bare things, but to an experience which embodies purpose; and here the question is not whether something exists or does not exist. This, as we have seen, is a scientific and not a philosophic question. Appearances are not illusions of the senses or fictions of the imagination. To call something 'Appearance' means that it is an experience, a way of living, in which we cannot rest since it contains a *nisus* towards a state of fulfilment beyond itself. It is disrupted from within by a contradiction which is primarily spiritual and secondarily logical. The contradiction at the heart of Appearance lies in the fact that there is a simultaneous reaching out towards, yet a receding away from, the Infinite which is the source of our being. Contradiction understood in a purely intellectual sense, as a clash of predicates in a logical judgment, does not constitute the meaning of Appearance, but is only a sign of its presence. There is a factual contradiction in experience, a division or lack of wholeness in the soul at the level of relative consciousness.

Such a level of consciousness gives Appearance and not Reality, and to call it Appearance is not merely to pronounce a judgment on a state of affairs, but also to lay down a mandate that this level of consciousness is to be transcended, the division healed and the contradiction overcome.

There is in man an irresistible urge towards Wholeness. This is revealed through an analysis of the scientific consciousness. Such an analysis is really a deeper self-awareness of the philosophic consciousness. The Significant Whole whose harmony transcends and resolves all discords and whose self-effulgent nature illuminates the totality of things in their minutest detail, is not a mere pious assumption of a religious sentiment that finds satisfaction in the opiate of dreams and illusions, but an infinitely more hard and inescapable fact than any that Science can confront us with. That many who call themselves hard-headed or tough-minded refuse to recognize the embodiment of the absolute Value as the Supreme Fact, cannot be brought as evidence against our conclusion, for the denial of the Absolute may be the result of being hard-headed within very narrow limits, and either pig-headed or remarkably soft-headed in dealing with problems connected with first principles which go beyond the limits of the sense-mind and its sensate values. We must affirm again that philosophical thinking alone arrives at first principles or postulates which are inescapable, but a proper appreciation of this fact requires the mind of the philosopher and not the philistine, even if in the case of the latter, philistinism is boosted and made respectable by lending to it the prestige of scientific knowledge.

In the end let us return to the question 'Does God exist?' What does this question mean? We cannot be satisfied with merely asserting that God exists, for we have distinguished Reality from mere existence. What merely exists may not be real, therefore when we ask 'Does God exist?' we want to know if God is real. But then what do we mean by Reality? Our analysis of the concept of Reality in Chapter I has shown that Reality is the Infinite or the Perfect Being, in other words, 'God'. It would then seem that the question 'Does God exist?' is equivalent to the rather strange question 'Is God God?' And the answer we have given, 'God exists', would seem to amount to the tautological statement, 'God is God'. But the proposition 'God exists' is not a tautology, though it may seem on our analysis to be so. It is, however, true that the proposition 'God does not exist' is self-contradictory, since it resolves itself into the proposition 'God is not God'. Here too the contradiction is implicit and not bare-faced. The judgment 'God exists' is a metaphysical judgment and we have to recognize that the analysis of metaphysical judgments is different from that of scientific judgments. In the case of scientific judgments we may ask whether they are analytic or synthetic or both. Whatever view we may take of analytic or synthetic judgments, a

scientific judgment necessarily presupposes a distinction between the subject and the predicate. It is never an identity judgment. A metaphysical judgment on the other hand seems to be an identity judgment without being tautological. It is not the affirmation of bare identity such as 'A is A'. Nor is it the affirmation of identity in difference. It seems to be an affirmation of identity through the *negation* of difference. The difference is not in the object judged but in the subjective approach to the object and the judgment 'God exists' asserts a complete coincidence of two concepts which were at first assumed to be distinct. That subject and predicate appear to be distinct is a consequence of the immaturity of the philosophical thought which is struggling to make its own presuppositions explicit. When philosophical thought matures or becomes explicit, then the initial distinction between the concept of God and the concept of Reality is overcome, and these two concepts converge towards each other and finally coincide. The question of God's existence arises only if we confuse Philosophy with Science, or if our thinking is not sufficiently philosophical. The question arises as we grow out of the scientific consciousness and the answer 'God exists' indicates that we have emerged into the philosophical consciousness. Once we have done so the doubt implied in the question is seen to be meaningless and the question can no more arise. If it still seems to arise, it is because, I venture to suggest, we are doing something which superficially resembles philosophy but is in reality an activity which may be described indifferently as pseudo-philosophy or pseudo-science. This is perhaps another way of saying that in the case of God essence and existence are one. In the proposition 'God exists', the subject stands for the essence and the predicate for the existence of one and the same Reality.

J. N. CHUBB.

Students' Section

MY BOYHOOD UNDER SRI AUROBINDO

ASPIRATION—WILL—RECEPTIVITY

20-1-1934 to 24-7-1934.

SELF: Whilst returning from the Mother I feel something like a burning fire within me; it pulls me more and more inward till I get plunged into peace and silence.

SRI AUROBINDO: It is the fire of aspiration and purification with the beginning of the true inner experience which, if it continues, creates the Yogic consciousness and in the end replaces by it the outer ordinary consciousness.

SELF: To what part of our being does the fire of aspiration belong?

SRI AUROBINDO: It is not limited to any part of the being.

SELF: Should not the fire become more and more intense and constant?

SRI AUROBINDO: If it does so, it is good, but the first thing is that it should maintain itself.

SELF: Is this fire the aspiration of the psychic being?

SRI AUROBINDO: The central fire is in the psychic being, but it can be lit in all the parts of the being.

SELF: In order to maintain the fire, is not a prolonged effort required?

SRI AUROBINDO: Aspiration more than effort.

SELF: Today I became conscious of a constant inner aspiration in spite of my mind being engaged externally! Who aspires then? And can there be such an aspiration?

MY HOYHOOD UNDER SRI AUROBINDO

SRI AUROBINDO: Of course. There are many different parts of the being. Any of them can go on aspiring even when the outer mind is engaged elsewhere.

SELF: Is it not true that unless the physical joins there can be no eagerness in the aspiration?

SRI AUROBINDO: No. It is when the vital joins that there is the eagerness.

SELF: Today I felt a deep intensity even though there was no aspiration. How do you explain it?

SRI AUROBINDO: It must have been a concentration in the consciousness. That can take place of itself even without a mental aspiration.

SELF: How should one set about the detaching of oneself from the mental action in order to be a witness?

SRI AUROBINDO: There is no device for these things. All is done by aspiration, tapasya (concentration, will etc.) or by opening oneself to the Divine Force.

SELF: N told me, "Offering is a thing that comes by itself. One need not make any effort, for it is a movement of love and joy."

SRI AUROBINDO: Essentially that is true—it is the real nature of offering—but there is a veil of self-centred vital ego which many find it difficult to remove without an inner tapasya.

SELF: Is it not time I left the charge of my sadhana to the Mother's Force?

SRI AUROBINDO: That can be only when all is ready.—The system has first to be accustomed to the Force working.

SELF: For the higher working, is not a state of blankness and silence better than that of aspiration?

SRI AUROBINDO: Neither is better than the other. Aspiration can come better from an inner silence than from a mind that is jumping about.

SELF: My concentration gets dispersed as soon as I aspire for anything. It prefers simply a state of receptivity—to receive whatever comes down from the Mother. Is that really a good habit?

SRI AUROBINDO: Not altogether. If the receptivity were very great it would not matter, but with a limited receptivity aspiration is indispensable.

SELF: Am I straining while concentrating or aspiring?

SRI AUROBINDO: Very probably, most people find it difficult to concentrate or aspire without some straining.

SELF: What kind of change is necessary for the consciousness to give up straining and have a free receptivity?

SRI AUROBINDO: It is not dependent on any other change. That is itself the change—to strain no longer but to call and receive. Only most people if they stop straining, stop calling also, and become tamasic.

SELF: When I give up effort, my consciousness gets seized by the mechanical round of the thinking mind. I do not know how to get the kind of meditation I want—a spontaneous receptivity.

SRI AUROBINDO: Let it come gradually. Effort is necessary till the receptivity is ready.

SELF: I sometimes feel that I must not let inner concentration develop if that means my not “tending” my consciousness to offering, as you have advised.

SRI AUROBINDO: I simply said that it was right to “tend” the consciousness to offering, but it was not necessary to do that in periods of concentrative quietude.

SELF: I read, “The Will—not that wish of the heart or that preference of the mind to which we give the name, but that dominant and often veiled force of our being.” Could you kindly explain me where that veiled Will is.

SRI AUROBINDO: In the consciousness. Mental will or vital will is only an outward form of this essential will in the consciousness.

SELF: Does this mean that the essential Will has a quite separate consciousness of its own?

SRI AUROBINDO: There is a consciousness other than mind and vital—if there were not, there would be no use in doing sadhana. The true will belongs to that consciousness.

SELF: Kindly tell me how to be conscious of and develop that true Will power.

MY BOYHOOD UNDER SRI AUROBINDO

SRI AUROBINDO: The only way to do it is (1) to become aware of a conscious Force behind that uses the mind etc. (2) to learn by practice to direct that Force towards its object. I don't suppose you will find it easy to do either of these things at once—One must first learn to live more deeply in the inner consciousness than you have done hitherto.

SELF: In order to get into touch with the true Will power, has not one to start with the mental or vital will?

SRI AUROBINDO: Everybody starts with the mental will. The vital does not usually help to get into touch with the real Will unless there is a very unusual kind of vital nature.

NAGIN DOSHI

ON WRITING

THERE are moments when we seem to be in contact with a world of words and any vagrant thought brings in a number of striking phrases, catchy turns and powerful moulds of expression. Each sunrise then adorns itself with different hues, every bird sings a new note, the flowers come out in their best costumes and the very houses seem to have changed their faces. A passing smile, a stray word rends to pieces some dark veil and opens to us a fresh field of thought. Through a shining magic glass we see the world and its forms reflect an illumined ray; some superfine expectancy guides our ears and the sounds of common day make up a celestial harmony....Such are moments of creation.

Every time it is the individual heart seeing into the movements of the cosmic spirit, receiving according to its state of being, responding where it feels an essence of pure similarity. In fact, the completely developed soul perceives God in all. He is the true writer despising nothing in the universe because he sees the purpose and the truth behind it. Every little thing is able to open unfathomable regions of his own self and show the ever-renewing miracle of this life. 'All objects are' to him 'windows through which' he 'looks into infinitude'...

Before we reach such a height all we can do is to aspire for flashes of revelation, for

...Moments when the inner lamps are lit
And the life's cherished guests are left outside.

It is then that we suddenly dive into an unknown region of our being and 'our spirit sits alone and speaks to its gulfs.' This exploration, if written down, often loses half its thrill because infinite shades of movement and feeling are forgotten and found, to our limited means, mostly inexpressible. Sometimes to put on paper such events seems a vain externalisation, a waste of energy which were better used somewhere else. But the writing of an illumination should fix it to our memory and be not only a source of constant renewal of that experience but a door leading into others. For, all literature is a going within.

When we describe a sunset we do not recreate the exact shades of red or orange that were actually there but colour it according to our own impression. We seek to reproduce in our own words the feeling evolved by the sunset, so

that we really speak of another sunset within us: perhaps with all its vivid hues
of joyous red,

Against the red throb of its sunset heart
I set my own to beat
And share commingling heat,

or with its mauve pallor of twilight,—

When the breath of twilight blows to flame the misty skies,
All its vaporous sapphire, violet glow and silver gleam
With their magic flood me...

But to be able to write what we feel about anything we must see what the truest 'we' in us feels. We cannot seek it in our mental make-up, not in the pre-formed ideas of different values, but deeper within where lies a truer judgment, a more catholic view of life and nature. We have only to give it space to express itself. Indeed all true art has been created when there is a passage clear between the outer shell of the artist and the Inspiration. But we ordinary folk who cannot expect to be artists want, even without inspiration, that if we have to write we should at least have something to say.

We argue sometimes that writing ought to be as easy as, if not easier than, speaking: the trend is kept up, there is no one to oppose you, you have only to put down what you would say in an uninterrupted monologue. But when it comes to practice we find the monologue a difficult form and our solitary thoughts not strong enough to hold it. We understand, after all, that in an ordinary conversation we just let ourselves drift along a common vibration and not really take part in it as conscious beings. For, are we not as a rule in that very superficial condition of human beings where anything or rather nothing provokes some useless talk? Indeed men are always talking and talking. Just try to imagine or ask them of what? And you also will get involved in that externalising machinery where men find illusory refuge from that frightening illumination of seeing their too stupid selves in silence.

Being absorbed so repeatedly in such a muddle we cannot expect our writing to have the weight of any clear thought or the flight of an illumined vision. Thoughts buzz about our minds but no arrangement seems to please and the right words escape. We are cut off from the life-giving essence of lucid imagination. We do not find the correct form nor understand how to get going. If we do write the body of the essay first, thinking optimistically that we are sure to see eventually the appropriate sequence—oh, it is a mishap! We go on writing with never a correct start or a finish to our labyrinthine subject.

Unfortunately much of the so-called literature of today is like that: the writer gets caught in his own subject and far from knowing the true conclusion he seems rarely to perceive even the right beginning. He reproduces life only in some of its striking superficial circumstances without even suggesting any satisfactory interpretation of the mystery or revealing the real purpose of its existence....Perhaps there are too many people who imagine themselves to be writers—another Addison to reform society, or a second Milton to justify the ways of God to man, a burning Carlyle who senses the truth of things, if not a genius Shakespeare seeing into the chiaroscuro of life with his poet's eye. And if all these seem too old-fashioned, the moderns strive after novelty and realism, try to scandalise the existing forms, lose themselves in action but achieve little. This reminds us of a French critic who has said a little caustically that fools try to invent while the wise copy: there was many a *Cid* before Corneille's, many a *Hamlet* before Shakespeare's, but the genius puts his own stroke as he copies, and stamps it with his own radiant personality. Open to argument and criticism, this opinion has yet its value. It shows us that every man is capable of being a writer provided he has sought out and expressed his real personality; because each individual has a separate value embodying one special aspect of the Supreme. He represents only one note, it is true, but that note is indispensable to complete the harmony. That is why, whenever he expresses his true self, he is great.

We must not therefore forget that writing is not mere wordiness; even wit or a pleasing fluent style or a maze of thought is not enough to be a valuable work. There must be knowledge—not of a technical type but a revelatory perception of the world, of nature, of man or of God. Literature, in fact, 'being an art must make us see', and as it is an inner sight that it must awaken in us this vision must first be intensely concrete to the writer himself. All his work becomes then essentially a 'presentation from within' and opens to us a wider consciousness—

And leaves its huge white stamp upon our lives.

AMITA

A ROSE-BUD'S SONG

BREAK the spider-veil around my being,
Alone beneath nocturnal frost I moan,
A deathless flame amid this agony
Invokes Thy pearly kiss, O Mother-Dawn!

My waking soul athirst for thy ecstasy
Desires to feel Thy fervent love supreme;
My frozen calix clasps me ever close:
In chill I shiver but my cherished dream

Awaits to blossom in Thy sweetness' law,
My petals sing the coming of that hour
When in the sky shall smile Thy truth-born face
And here on earth Thy love-lit crimson flower!

PRITHWINDRA

THE TRAVELLER

BOOK IV: PART II

THE SAGE

THE traveller rose, set on his way,
Careless where his steps should stray;
Lost in a contemplative mood
When suddenly before him stood
A bearded figure strangely tall
Within whose eyes there rang the call
Of stars, whose friendly lips the while
Spoke worlds of wisdom in a smile
Of love.

“Pray tell me who you are?
For I am a traveller from a far
Off land—I fell to contemplation,
Wished in my heart that this great nation
Might teach the world its soul to know
That love might here diviner grow
And man might find a unity
Of Truth in his humanity.”

“Then say, my son, I am the answer
To your wish, which the Entrancer
Weaves out of sincerity—
Seer, sage others figure me;
Yet I am like you, O friend!
A traveller who perhaps can lend
A hand upon the way, and show
The stepping stones across this flow
Of life which now seems strange and new.”

“True! O gracious father, true!
Down through the years my heart has yearned,
And deep within a flame has burned

THE TRAVELLER

For Truth—not that which men call truth
But that which fires the soul of Youth
With its sincerity—what name
Shall speech inspire—that which can flame
The heart to strange Reality—
Fire of Immortality?
I have no word of power to express
This longing for the true 'Caress'
Of Love, beyond all moral duty:
Love which is Knowledge, Bliss and highest Beauty."

The aged one smiled at the youth
And said: "You seek for highest Truth—
And do you find it here, my son?"

"I know not but I have begun
To see beyond the changeful senses;
Here where the tropic sunlight glances
From the nude body of a god.
Here where the warrior souls have trod
The path of slave and sacrifice
Wrung from the human hearts of thrice
A hundred million lives or more,
A cry that echoes now on Freedom's shore."

"There comes an honoured friend of mine
Who too seeks truly the Divine
And who like you has travelled far—
And like a lone and wandering star
That seeks some galaxy of light
Has journeyed through the edge of night
And found a controversial eye
Appraising his divinity.
He too has visited your land
And will most readily understand.
Hail, friend! well met, we talk of you—
Give this our foreign friend a true
Account of what you most found good,
That which you found as spirit food

MOTHER INDIA

In those far lands beyond the seas
From where he hails—not just to please
But as a balance to the truth
Of things; for here is vibrant youth
Filled with enthusiasm's cry
To wrest from Heaven its own divinity.”

“Welcome, stranger, to our land;
Come I'll shake you by the hand
For I have much admired your race
And 'tis by providence or Grace,
Or something more that might have been
That set my eyes on shores so green
As yours. Such fond imagination
Leaps to view. Or strong elation
Floods the memory once more
And sees again the white-edged shore
Of dream. Oh to be there when spring
Breaks forth anew and everything
Is wonder-green, new-washed the skies,
And laughter fills the children's eyes.
Sure there is felt the throbbing heart
Of Nature, like a farmer's cart
It clings to Mother-Earth, the soil,
And is the symbol of the farmer's toil.”

“You make my eyes see home again,
And yet I see the driving rain
Pouring on cities, not the trees
Of countryside or lane, but seas
Of faces hurrying through the streets.
Where newsboys shelter with their sheets
Of lies—where there's no children's eyes
To echo the laughter of the falling skies.”

“My son, you paint a dreary sight
Of shadows bare without the light
Of soul or sun or moon or stars.
Your image is of prison bars
That hem the heart in its own dream

THE TRAVELLER

Of sense, but surely there's a gleam
Behind the modern moving pace—
Perhaps you only see its painted face?"

"He talks of cities, father, but
His eyes have caught the beauty shut
In northern skies. He is as one
That sees a mighty work begun,
As if reflected in a glass,
And will not let its image pass
Into an other eternity.
Some brave and brilliant deity
Has burn'd its image on his soul
And now he seeks a higher self-control."

"'Tis enigmatic words you speak
And yet behind them I would seek
The truth from which they spring, O friend—
Whose is the beginning, whose the end?
And where is this Love which pulls my heart
So that I feel a very part
Of you?—Have we then met before
In some other life, upon some other shore?"

"You two have surely met before
But why upon some other shore?
Here on earth in bygone days
You two have met in many ways.
Is Destiny yours to have, or mine?
Neither,—Destiny *is* the Divine!
Reason not the way of a star,
Whether you are near or far
From God—but feel yourself and know
The road to take, the way to go.
Then only will you find the Goal
Within you burning like a precious soul."

"It seems since childhood I have known
You two. One as my brother older grown
And one more father than my kith

MOTHER INDIA

Or kin, yet steeped in secret myth
That I remember in my dreams
Of long ago, yet vivid seems
The impress on my mind and heart
That they are now a living part.
As if new focus brought to view
A peak of consciousness not new,
But newly seen through full-grown eyes
To bridge the years through endless memories.”
“My son, we are travellers all—yet now
A brilliance sits on heavens’ brow,
A new illumined consciousness
Awaits to blossom here and bless
This mortal soil, this struggling earth;
And we await this Advent of New Birth.”

“So says my heart, and deeper still
Where burns a Flame and where the will
Has grasped an inner certainty,
A voice speaks with authority—
Speaks with the certainty of God.
It seems as if my feet have trod
These roads before; or that my eyes
Have like an eagle roamed the skies
And seen beyond the roadway where
We travel on to some pure air
Some peak where kindred souls can meet
Some mountain top, some lone retreat
Where lives the Perfect Law of life,
Yet not divorced from human strife
And struggle; where all life’s problems are,
Yet where true freedom, like a star,
Seems one small promise of the Whole
But is a flaming planet of the Soul.”

Answered the sage in accents low,
Yet puissant like high winds that blow.
“Surely ’tis with heaven’s Grace
That you do journey to that place
Beside the sea where She awaits.
For so you have described the Fates

THE TRAVELLER

That do attend on you, and claim
Their full protection in Her Name.
So now will I disclose with joy
The Road; instruct and so employ
Myself to speed you on the way
Towards the vision of discovered Day.”

He ceased, and silence fell awhile
Between them like a friendly smile
That strives to understand and know
By feeling, that where'er may blow
The Winds of Truth, there Truth must be—
Yes! even the Winds of Immortality.

“You speak of the Mother of Liberty,
The Queen of Immortality?
Is She the symbol of this world,
The human sign to be unfurled
Before the universal plan?
Is She the Power that raises man
Beyond himself to higher states,
Beyond the forces and the Fates,
The play of Chance and Circumstance,
The riddle of the Cosmic Dance?
And is She too this flame that burns
Within my heart, this love which yearns
For Truth and liberty of soul?
Is She the purpose of our life, the goal?”

“My son She is all this, and more
To which the tongues of men can soar,
She is the first bright ‘sight’ of Day
That sets the traveller on his way—
She is the Adventure on the Road;
The urge in man, the constant goad
That fires his vision for the heights—
His widenesses and all his mights
Which make life richer;—all that brings
Him nearer to his soul and rings
With that authority of God

MOTHER INDIA

Are footsteps where Her feet have trod
The endless signs in every land.
If man would only understand
The purpose of his life on earth,
Then he would know She rules all birth.
She is the Dawn-light in the eyes
Of Truth; the calm of azure skies
Enriches Her like a goddess robe
Embroidered with the stars: this globe
Of earth is Her vast mantle fair
And heaven informs Her atmosphere.
She is the patience of the hours
That wait upon the silent flowers
In gardens of eternity.
She is the Secret harmony
Of light that paints the clouds and sky;
The purple hues of mountains high,
And soft below the valley's green
Reflected in the lakes serene.
She is all form and beauty bright
That yearns towards a higher light.
She is the secret soul in the seed
Which longs from darkness to be freed;
She is the Law of heaven and earth
Labouring on towards diviner Birth."

A living silence reigned supreme
Within the moment of a dream
Where Light blazed secret in the heart
Of Time, and was not just a part
But did contain this world in Bliss—
It was the Golden Dawn's awakening Kiss.

NORMAN DOWSETT