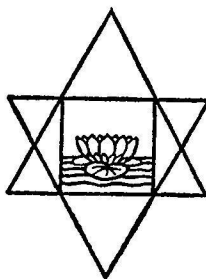


# MOTHER INDIA

MARCH, 1955

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

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

SRI AUROBINDO

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

*Sri Aurobindo*

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

# MOTHER INDIA

• MONTHLY REVIEW OF CULTURE

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*"Great is Truth and it shall prevail"*

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# THE SECRET OF THE VEDA

SRI AUROBINDO

## SELECTED HYMNS

BRIHASPATI, POWER OF THE SOUL

RIGVEDA IV, 50

1. He who established in his might the extremities of the earth, Brihaspati, in the triple world of our fulfilment, by his cry, on him the pristine sages meditated and, illumined, set him in their front with his tongue of ecstasy.

2. They, O Brihaspati, vibrating with the impulse of their movement, rejoicing in perfected consciousness wove for us abundant, rapid, invincible, wide, the world from which this being was born. That do thou protect, O Brihaspati.

3. O Brihaspati, that which is the highest supreme of existence, thither from this world they attain and take their seat who touch the Truth. For thee are dug the wells of honey which drain this hill and their sweetnesses stream out on every side and break into overflowing.

4. Brihaspati first in his birth from the vast light, in the highest heavenly space, with his seven fronts, with his seven rays, with his many births, drives utterly away the darknesses that encompass us with his cry.

5. He with his cohort of the rhythm that affirms, of the chant that illumines has broken Vala into pieces with his cry. Brihaspati drives upward the Bright Ones who speed our offerings; he shouts aloud as he leads them, lowing they reply.

6. Thus to the Father, the Universal Godhead, the Bull of the herds, may we dispose our sacrifices and submission and oblations; O Brihaspati, full of energy and rich in offspring may we become masters of the felicities.

7. Verily is he King and conquers by his energy, by his heroic force all that is in the worlds that confront him, who bears Brihaspati in him well-contained and has the exultant dance and adores and gives him the first fruits of his enjoyment.

8. Yea, he dwells firmly seated in his proper home and for him Ila at all times grows in richness. To him all creatures of themselves submit, the King, he in whom the Soul-Power goes in front.

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9. None can assail him, he conquers utterly all the riches of the worlds which confront him and the world in which he dwells; he who for the Soul-Power that seeks its manifestation creates in himself that highest good, is cherished by the gods.

10. Thou, O Brihaspati, and Indra, drink the Soma-wine rejoicing in this sacrifice, lavishing substance. Let the powers of its delight enter into you and take perfect form, control in us a felicity full of every energy.

11. O Brihaspati, O Indra, increase in us together and may that your perfection of mind be created in us; foster the thoughts, bring out the mind's multiple powers; destroy all poverties that they bring who seek to conquer the Aryan.

## COMMENTARY

Brihaspati, Brahmanaspati, Brahma are the three names of the god to whom the Rishi Vamadeva addresses this mystic hymn of praise. In the later Puranic theogonies Brihaspati and Brahma have long become separate deities. Brahma is the Creator, one of the Three who form the great Puranic Trinity; Brihaspati is a figure of no great importance, spiritual teacher of the gods, and incidentally guardian of the planet Jupiter; Brahmanaspati, the middle term which once linked the two, has disappeared. To restore the physiognomy of the Vedic deity we have to reunite what has been disjoined and correct the values of the two separated terms in the light of the original Vedic conceptions.

*Brahman* in the Veda signifies ordinarily the Vedic Word or mantra in its profoundest aspect as the expression of the intuition arising out of the depths of the soul or being. It is a voice of the rhythm which has created the worlds and creates perpetually. All world is expression or manifestation, creation by the Word. Conscious Being luminously manifesting its contents in itself, of itself, *tmanā*, is the superconscient; holding its contents obscurely in itself it is the subconscient. The higher, the self-luminous descends into the obscure, into the night, into darkness concealed in darkness, *tamas tamasā gūd'ham*, where all is hidden in formless being owing to fragmentation of consciousness, *tucchyena-bhwapihitam*. It arises again out of the Night by the Word to reconstitute in the conscient its vast unity, *tan mahinajayatakam*. This vast Being, this all-containing and all-formulating consciousness is Brahman. It is the Soul that emerges out of the subconscient in Man and rises towards the super-conscient. And the word of creative Power welling upward out of the soul is also *brahman*.

The Divine, the Deva, manifests itself as conscious Power of the soul, creates the worlds by the Word out of the waters of the subconscient, *apraketam śalilam sarvam*,—the inconscient ocean that was this all, as it is plainly termed

in the great Hymn of Creation. This power of the Deva is Brahma, the stress in the name falling more upon the conscious soul-power than upon the Word which expresses it. The manifestation of the different world-planes in the conscient human being culminates in the manifestation of the superconscient, the Truth and the Bliss, and this is the office of the supreme Word or Veda. Of this supreme word Brihaspati is the master, the stress in this name falling upon the potency of the Word rather than upon the thought of the general soul-power which is behind it. Brihaspati gives the Word of knowledge, the rhythm of expression of the superconscient, to the gods and especially to Indra, the lord of Mind, when they work in man as "Aryan" power for the great consummation. It is easy to see how these conceptions came to be specialised in the broader, but less subtle and profound Puranic symbolism into Brahma, the Creator, and Brihaspati, the teacher of the gods. In the name, Brahmanaspati, the two varying stresses are unified and equalised. It is the link-name between the general and the special aspects of the same deity.

Brihaspati is he who has established firmly the limits and definitions of the Earth, that is to say of the material consciousness. The existence out of which all formations are made is an obscure, fluid and indeterminate movement,—*sahilam*, Water. The first necessity is to create a sufficiently stable formation out of this flux and running so as to form a basis for the life of the conscient. This Brihaspati does in the formation of the physical consciousness and its world, *sahasā*, by force, by a sort of mighty constraint upon the resistance of the subconscious. This great creation he effects by establishing the triple principle of mind, life and body, always present together and involved in each other or evolved out of each other in the world of the cosmic labour and fulfilment. The three together form the triple seat of Agni and there he works out the gradual work of accomplishment or perfection which is the object of the sacrifice. Brihaspati forms by sound, by his cry, *raveṇa*, for the Word is the cry of the soul as it awakens to ever-new perceptions and formations.<sup>1</sup> "He who established firmly by force the ends of the earth, Brihaspati in the triple seat of the fulfilment, by his cry."

On him, it is said, the ancient or pristine Rishis meditated; meditating, they became illumined in mind; illumined, they set him in front as the god of the ecstatic tongue, *mandraṅghvam*, the tongue that takes joy of the intoxicating wine of Soma, *mada*, *madhu*, of that which is the wave of sweetness, *madhumān ūrmih*, hidden in the conscient existence and out of it progressively delivered.<sup>2</sup> But of whom is there question? The seven divine Rishis, *ṛṣayo divyāḥ*, who

<sup>1</sup> *Yas tastambha sahasā vi jmo antān, braṣpatis triṣadastho raveṇa.*

<sup>2</sup> *Tam pratnāsa ṛṣayo dīdhyānāḥ, puro viprā dadhre mandraṅghvam.*

fulfilling consciousness in each of its seven principles and harmonising them together superintend the evolution of the world, or the human fathers, *pitaro manuṣyāḥ*, who first discovered the higher knowledge and formulated for man the infinity of the Truth-consciousness? Either may be intended, but the reference seems to be rather to the conquest of the Truth by the human fathers, the Ancients. The word *dīdhyaṇa* in the Veda means both shining, becoming luminous, and thinking, meditating, fixing in the thought. It is constantly being used with the peculiar Vedic figure of a double or complex sense. In the first sense it must be connected with *viprāḥ*, and the suggestion is that the Rishis became more and more luminous in thought by the triumphant force of Brihaspati until they grew into Illuminates, *viprāḥ*. In the second it is connected with *dadhure* and suggests that the Rishis, meditating on the intuitions that rise up from the soul with the cry of Brihaspati in the sacred and enlightening Word, holding them firmly in the thought, became illuminated in mind, open to the full inflow of the superconscient. They were thus able to bring into the front of the conscious being that activity of the soul-thoughts which works usually in the background, veiled, and to make it the leading activity of their nature. As a result Brihaspati in them became able to taste for them the bliss of existence, the wine of Immortality, the supreme Ananda. The formation of the definite physical consciousness is the first step, this awakening to the Ananda by the bringing forward in mind of the intuitive soul as the leader of our conscious activities is the consummation or, at least, the condition of the consummation.

The result is the formation of the Truth-consciousness in man. The ancient Rishis attained to the most rapid vibration of the movement; the most full and swift streaming of the flux of consciousness which constitutes our active existence, no longer obscure as in the subconscious, but full of the joy of perfected consciousness,—not *apraketam* like the Ocean described in the Hymn of Creation, but *supraketam*. Thus they are described, *dhumetayah supraketam madantah*. With this attainment of the full rapidity of the activities of consciousness unified with its full light and bliss in the human mentality they have woven for the race by the web of these rapid, luminous and joyous perceptions the Truth-consciousness, Ritam Brihat, which is the womb or birth-place of this conscient being. For it is out of the superconscient that existence descends into the subconscious and carries with it that which emerges here as the individual human being, the conscious soul. The nature of this Truth-consciousness is in itself this that it is abundant in its outflowings, *prśantam*, or, it may be, many-coloured in the variety of its harmonised qualities; it is rapid in its motion, *śrpram*; by that luminous rapidity it triumphs over all that seeks to quell or break it, it is *adabddham*; above all it is wide, vast,

infinite, *ūrvam*. In all these respects it is the opposite of the first limited movement which emerges out of the subconscious; for that is stunted and grey, slow and hampered, easily overcome and broken by the opposition of hostile powers, scanty and bounded in its scope.<sup>1</sup> But this Truth-consciousness manifested in man is capable of being again veiled from him by the insurgence of the powers that deny, the Vritras, Vala. The Rishi therefore prays to Brihaspati to guard it against that obscuration by the fullness of his soul-force.

The Truth-consciousness is the foundation of the superconscious, the nature of which is the Bliss. It is the supreme of the superconscious, *paramā parāvat*, from which the being has descended, the *parama parārdha* of the Upanishads, the existence of Sachchidananda. It is to that highest existence that those arise out of this physical consciousness, *atah*, who like the ancient Rishis enter into contact with the Truth-consciousness.<sup>2</sup> They make it their seat and home, *kshaya, okas*. For in the hill of the physical being there are dug for the soul those abounding wells of sweetness which draw out of its hard rigidity the concealed Ananda; at the touch of the Truth the rivers of honey, the quick pourings of the wine of Immortality trickle and stream and break out into a flood of abundance over the whole extent of the human consciousness.<sup>3</sup>

Thus Brihaspati, becoming manifest first of the gods out of the vastness of that Light of the Truth-consciousness, in that highest heavenly space of the supreme superconscious, *maho jyotiṣaḥ parame vyoman*, presents himself in the full sevenfold aspect of our conscious being, multiply born in all the forms of the interplay of its seven principles ranging from the material to the purest spiritual, luminous with their sevenfold ray which lights all our surfaces and all our profundities, and with his triumphant cry dispels and scatters all powers of the Night, all encroachments of the Inconscious, all possible darknesses.<sup>4</sup>

It is by the powers of the Word, by the rhythmic army of the soul-forces that Brihaspati brings all into expression and dispelling all the darknesses that encompass us makes an end of the Night. These are the "Brahma"s of the Veda, charged with the word, the *brahman*, the *mantra*; it is they in the sacrifice who raise heavenward the divine Rik, the *Stubh* or *Stoma*. *Rik*, connected with the word *arka* which means light or illumination, is the word considered as a power of realisation in the illuminating consciousness; *Stubh* is the Word considered as a power which affirms and confirms in the settled rhythm of things.

<sup>1</sup>*Dhunetayah supraketaṃ madanto, brhaspate abhi ye naś tatasre;  
Prsantam srpram adabdhāṃ ūrvam, brhaspate rakṣatād asya yonim.  
Brhaspate yā paramā parāvad, ata ā te rtaśprso mśeduh.*

<sup>3</sup>*Tubhyam khātā avatā adridugdhā, madhwah ścorantu abhito virāpsam.*

<sup>4</sup>*Brhaspatih prathamam jāyamāno, mano jyotiṣaḥ parame vyoman;  
Saptāśyas tuvyāto raveṇa, vi saptaraśmur adhamat tamānsi.*



That which has to be expressed is realised in consciousness, affirmed, finally confirmed by the power of the Word. The "Brahma"s or Brahmana forces are the priests of the Word, the creators by the divine rhythm. It is by their cry that Brihaspati breaks *Vala* into fragments.

As Vritra is the enemy, the Dasyu, who holds back the flow of the seven-fold waters of conscient existence,—Vritra, the personification of the Inconscient, so Vala is the enemy, the Dasyu, who holds back in his hole, his cave, *bilam, guhā*, the herds of the Light; he is the personification of the subconscious. Vala is not himself dark or inconscient, but a cause of darkness. Rather his substance is of the light, *valam gomantam, valam govapuṣam*, but he holds the light in himself and denies its conscious manifestation. He has to be broken into fragments in order that the hidden lustres may be liberated. Their escape is expressed by the emergence of the Bright Ones, the herds of the Dawn, from the cavern below in the physical hull and their driving upward by Brihaspati to the heights of our being whither with them and by them we climb. He calls to them with the voice of the superconscient knowledge; they follow him with the response of the conscious intuition. They give in their course the impulsion to the activities which form the material of the sacrifice and constitute the offerings given to the gods and these also are carried upward till they reach the same divine goal.<sup>1</sup>

This self-expressive Soul, Brihaspati, is the Purusha, the Father of all things; it is the universal Divinity; it is the Bull of the herds, the Master and fertilizer of all these luminous energies evolved or involved, active in the day or obscurely working in the night of things, which constitute the becoming or world-existence, *bhuvanam*. To the Purusha under the name of Brihaspati the Rishi would have us dispose in the order of a sacrifice all the materials of our being by sacrificial action in which they are given up to the All-Soul as acceptable oblations offered with adoration and surrender. By the sacrifice we shall become through the grace of this godhead full of heroic energy for the battle of life, rich in the offspring of the soul, masters of the felicities which are attained by divine enlightenment and right action.<sup>2</sup>

For the soul's energy and overcoming force are perfected in the human being who bears in himself and is able to bear firmly this conscious Soul-power brought forward as the leading agency in the nature, who arrives by it at a rapid and joyous movement of the inner activities as did the pristine sages, compasses

<sup>1</sup> *Sa suṣṭubhā sa ṛkvatā ganena, valam ruroja phaligam raveṇa;  
Bṛhaspatur usriyā havyasūdah, kanikradad vāvaśatīr udājat.*

<sup>2</sup> *Evā pitre vi vadevāya vṛshn'e, yajnar vidhema namasā havirbhīh,  
Bṛhaspate suprajā vīravanto, vayam syamāh patayo rayiṇām.*

that harmonious bound and gallop of the steed of Life within and adores always this godhead giving it the first fruits of all results and enjoyments. By that energy he throws himself upon and masters all that comes to him in the births, the worlds, the planes of consciousness that open upon his perception in the progress of the being. He becomes the king, the *samrāt*, ruler of his world-environment.<sup>1</sup>

For such a soul attains to a firmly settled existence in its own proper home, the Truth-consciousness, the infinite totality, and for it at all times Ila, the highest Word, premier energy of the Truth-consciousness, she who is the direct revealing vision in knowledge and becomes in that knowledge the spontaneous self-attainment of the Truth of things in action, result and experience, —Ila grows perpetually in body and richness. To him all creatures of themselves incline, they submit to the Truth in him because it is one with the Truth in themselves. For the conscious Soul-Power that is the universal creator and realiser, leads in all his activities. It gives him the guidance of the Truth in his relations with all creatures and therefore he acts upon them with an entire and spontaneous mastery. This is the ideal state of man that the soul-force should lead him, Brihaspati, Brahma, the spiritual light and counsellor, and he realising himself as Indra, the royal divinity of action, should govern himself and all his environment in the right of their common Truth. *Brahmā rājani pūrva eti.*<sup>2</sup>

For this Brahma, this creative Soul seeks to manifest and increase himself in the royalty of the human nature and he who attains to that royalty of light and power and creates in himself for Brahma that highest human good, finds himself always cherished, fostered, increased by all the divine cosmic powers who work for the supreme consummation. He wins all those possessions of the soul which are necessary for the royalty of the spirit, those that belong to his own plane of consciousness, and those that present themselves to him from other planes of consciousness. Nothing can assail or affect his triumphant progress.<sup>3</sup>

Indra and Brihaspati are thus the two divine powers whose fullness in us and conscious possession of the Truth are the conditions of our perfection. Vamadeva calls on them to drink in this great sacrifice the wine of immortal Ananda, rejoicing in the intoxication of its ecstasies, pouring out abundantly the substance and riches of the spirit. Those outpourings of the superconscious

<sup>1</sup> *Sa id rājā pratjanyām visvā, śushmen'a tashāv abh vryeṇ'a;  
Bṛhaspatim yah subhṛtam vibharti, valgūyati vandate pūrvabhājam.*

<sup>2</sup> *Sa it ksheti sudhita okasi sve, tasmā ilā pinvate viṣvadānim;  
Tasmai viśah swayam eva namante, yasmīn brahmā rājani pūrva eti.*

<sup>3</sup> *Apratīto jayati sam dhanām, pratjanyāmi utā vā sajanā;  
Avasyave yo varivah kṛṇoti, brahmane rājā tam avanti devāh.*

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beatitude must enter into the soul-force and there take being perfectly. Thus a felicity will be formed, a governed harmony, replete with all the energies and capacities of the perfected nature which is master of itself and its world.<sup>1</sup>

So let Brihaspati and Indra increase in us and that state of right mentality which together they build will be manifested; for that is the first condition. Let them foster the growing thoughts and bring into expression those energies of the mental being which by an enriched and multiple thought become capable of the illumination and rapidity of the Truth-consciousness. The powers that attack the Aryan fighter, would create in him poverties of mind and poverties of the emotive nature, all infelicities. Soul force and mental force, increasing together, destroy all such poverty and insufficiency. Together they bring man to his crowning and his perfect kingdom.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Indras ca somam pivatam brhaspate, asmin yajne mandasānā vrasaṅvasū;  
A vām viśantu indavah svābhavo, asme rayim sarvavīram ni yacchatam.*

<sup>2</sup> *Bṛhaspate Indra vardhatannah, sacā sā vām sumatir bhūtu asme.  
Aviṣtam dhīyo jgṛtam purandhīr, jayastam aryo vanuṣhām arātih.*

## MY CORRESPONDENCE WITH SRI AUROBINDO

### MEDICAL SECTION: IV

#### FORCES

MYSELF: I hear that plenty of forces come to people while meditating. Even the force of illness can come, I am told, if one gets scared.

SRI AUROBINDO: Well, that is quite possible. If it does one has only to kick it away and say, "Get off, you fool." Or if you are not vigorous enough to do that call the Mother's force.

MYSELF: When the forces come during meditation, it seems that if one lets fear possess one, there is even a chance of madness.

SRI AUROBINDO: Not necessarily madness. Plenty of people get afraid without getting mad. Madness is exceptional. What fear does is to stop the experience or else it exposes you to blows from the vital beings. If you don't fear, they can't hit you. Fear must not enter in Yoga. As Vivekananda said, the Yogi must be *অভী*.

MYSELF: I can't understand how any illness can come by subtle forces. How is that to be reconciled with the action of the germs?

SRI AUROBINDO: What is the difficulty? You are like the scientists who say or used to say that there is no such thing as mind or thought independent of the physical brain: mind and thought are only names for brain quiverings. Or that there is no such thing as vital Force because all the movements of life depend upon chemicals, glands and what not. These things and the germs also are a minor physical instrumentation for something supraphysical.

MYSELF: How do the subtle forces work to bring about illness?

SRI AUROBINDO: They first weaken or break through the nervous envelope, the aura. If that is strong and whole, a thousand million germs will not be able to do anything to you. The envelope pierced, they attack the subconscious mind in the body, sometimes also the vital mind or mind proper—prepare the

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illness by fear or thought of illness. The doctors themselves say that in influenza or cholera in the Far East 90 p.c. get ill through fear. Nothing to take away the resistance like fear. But still the subconscious is the main thing.

If the contrary Force is strong in the body one can move in the midst of plague and cholera and never get contaminated.

MYSELF: What about Ramakrishna dying of cancer? But he was an Avatar!

SRI AUROBINDO: Why should he not? Why on earth limit the possibilities of an Avatar?

MYSELF: Even if we take his Avatarhood to be compatible with his cancer, should not the cancer be accepted as a physical fact due to physical causes rather than as due to subtle forces, the result (if we are to believe Ramakrishna himself) of a moral-spiritual situation? Do not the Laws of Nature and the existence of the material world that is proved by our instruments of observation make things like soul and God and subtle worlds superfluous?

SRI AUROBINDO: What did he himself say about it—that it was the sins of his disciples which constituted the cancer? There is a physical aspect of things and there is an occult supraphysical aspect—one need not get in the way of the other. All physical things are the expression of the supraphysical. The existence of a body with physical instruments and processes does not, as the 19th century wrongly imagined, disprove the existence of a soul which uses the body even if it is also conditioned by it. Laws of Nature do not disprove the existence of God. The fact of a material world to which our instruments are accorded does not disprove the existence of less material worlds which certain subtler instruments can show to us.

MYSELF: The spiritual Force is said to be enough to cure illnesses. Why then do you encourage Dr. X's treatment? This Force and his medicines—aren't they incompatibles?

SRI AUROBINDO: Where the illness becomes pronounced and chronic in the body, it is necessary often to call in the aid of physical treatment and that is then used as a support of the Force. X in his treatment does not rely on medicines alone, but uses them as an instrumentation for the Mother's force.

MYSELF: Can the anti-illness force of the Yogic consciousness be absolute?

SRI AUROBINDO: The absoluteness can only come with the supramental change. For below the supramental, it is an action of a Force among many forces—in the supramental, it becomes a law of the nature.

MYSELF: Can the supramental really make a tottering old man, with all his anatomy and physiology pathological, immortal? It seems too much to expect even from the Yogic Force!

SRI AUROBINDO: Well, don't you know that old men sometimes get a new or third set of teeth in their old age? And if monkey-glands can renew functions and forces and can make hair grow on a bald head, as Voronoff has proved by living examples,—well? And mark that Science is only at the beginning of these experiments. If these possibilities are opening before Science, why should one declare their absolute impossibility by other means?

There is a difference between Yogic Force and Supramental Nature. What is acquired and held by the Force in the one becomes inherent in the Supramental and exists by nature—it becomes self-existent and absolute.

MYSELF: I was myself going to write to you about Voronoff and rejuvenation. Have you any idea why the monkey-gland is used? I wonder how far the rejuvenating operation is successful.

SRI AUROBINDO: It is successful partially and for a period—one cannot say more than that. But even that—rejuvenation for a period—is a tremendous progress and how can one say where it will end? As for the monkey, it is because it is nearest to man and at the same time of an extremely vital nature, I mean full of vital force. As for the gland, it is because the seat of the physical energy is there which supports and reinforces all the rest. Voronoff's selection is perfectly logical and intuitive at the same time.

NIRODBARAN

## SADHANA WITH THE MOTHER

### THE NEGATION BY THE PHYSICAL

SADHAKA: It was a matter of great relief when my lower vital put itself into the hands of the Mother.

SRI AUROBINDO: Yes, but it is not enough that the lower vital should put itself into the Mother's hands. The whole physical and subconscious and everything else must do likewise. (4-1-1935)

SADHAKA: Sometimes I feel that there is an essential change in my ordinary mind. But then how is it that the tamas is still rising up?

SRI AUROBINDO: It rises in that case not from any mind level but from the essential physical consciousness itself (environmental as well as personal). (8-1-1935)

SADHAKA: The inertia occupies most of my being. Where have I committed a mistake?

SRI AUROBINDO: I don't suppose there is any mistake. There are often such uprisings of tamas in the action and reaction of the forces without anything having been done to bring them. (23-1-1935)

SADHAKA: Why is there such a mad revolt in the lower Prakriti? No one had put any pressure there for a change.

SRI AUROBINDO: It is probably after the progress made about the inner consciousness receiving in spite of the inertia that the tamas rose so strongly in order to assert its right to obstruct the progress.

SADHAKA: There is an attempt in my being to support and help the working of the Mother's Force. If it succeeds sufficiently the tamas would hardly be able to delay the journey; it would be transformed into peace.

SRI AUROBINDO: Yes, that is how it should happen—but it is difficult so long as the inner being is not conscious and receptive at all times and in all conditions—and it is difficult and takes time to establish such a condition. (23-1-1934)

## SADHANA WITH THE MOTHER

SADHAKA: Yesterday you spoke about the inner being. Today when the *tamas* began to rise as usual it stopped it. I would like to establish such a condition for good. Shall I succeed?

SRI AUROBINDO: At any rate you have now the way and the power to do it.  
(24-I-1938)

SADHAKA: This morning when I got up I found myself already besieged by the army of the lower forces. Till yesterday I had at least some periods of relief when I could retire for a rest. But since this morning the whole time has been filled with the attacks. It is obvious that those forces are marching forward.

SRI AUROBINDO: You do not say what the battle was about. However, whatever it might be, it has to be fought out and the main thing is to keep the inner quietude and faith.  
(27-I-1935)

SADHAKA: What is "the battle about"? The only thing these forces mind is my inner relation with the Mother. They object to it.

SRI AUROBINDO: Of course they have very strong objections. (28-I-1935)

SADHAKA: I felt that some people around me were used by the lower forces to upset me. Was it really so?

SRI AUROBINDO: It may have been the lower forces working in them as well. But in what form did they come up, these lower forces? (28-I-1935)

SADHAKA: What is the intention of the forces in their continued inroads?

SRI AUROBINDO: They hope by persistence to tire you out or to get in by sheer obstinacy—or at least to delay the realisation by their attacks. That is always their method. If they can shake the faith, the peace and *samata*, they think themselves richly recompensed.  
(26-I-1935)

SADHAKA: This morning as soon as I got up from sleep the attack was started. I tried in vain to bring down something from above to meet it. So I had to meet it empty-handed.

After some time the inner being gathered some of its scattered strings by aspiration. However, the collected energy got quickly exhausted; and I had to go on drawing in more and more.

SRI AUROBINDO: That is what you should do always. Remain quiet, open yourself upward and call or aspire.  
(29-I-1935)



MOTHER INDIA

SADHAKA: My mind could not understand why the collected force was exhausted so soon.

SRI AUROBINDO: You should have gone on collecting forces first. If the energy brought down is sufficient, then it does not get easily exhausted.

SADHAKA: I intend to sweep out the lower forces before meeting the Mother tomorrow. Failing it I do not like to show my face to her.

SRI AUROBINDO: That is a suggestion of the lower forces. They want to create an excuse for your remaining aloof like that.

SADHAKA: Now I find it difficult to maintain even a mental aspiration!

SRI AUROBINDO: It is a result of the adverse pressure.

SADHAKA: I feel that after the Mother's opening me to the first of the higher planes, a preparation for the second plane is going on. But, during the passage through the intermediate zone, the adverse forces are trying to pull me down.

SRI AUROBINDO: What do you mean exactly by the intermediate zone?

It is not likely that the attack is for preventing your rising above the Higher Mind. It is rather probable that they want to prevent two things—first, your being permanently above in the Self and secondly the descent of the Force which should fill the Peace and Silence.

(30-1-1935)

SADHAKA: I think H had not to pass so many days in sheer darkness like me.

SRI AUROBINDO: Your difficulties are not worse than those of H or others.

SADHAKA: You wrote two days back: "In what form did they come up, these lower forces?" Well, I don't know that. They simply come up.

SRI AUROBINDO: What forces? what form do they take? *tamas*? *ego*? *sex*? dissatisfactions? wrong suggestions? Your descriptions speak only of attacks and suspension of the realisations—but what is the nature or form of the attack?

(30-1-1935)

SADHAKA: These forces want me to remain below, that is, in their own domain of darkness.

SRI AUROBINDO: What is this darkness then? Is it merely a negative condition or is there active disturbance and if so, of what kind? If it is only a

## SADHANA WITH THE MOTHER

negative condition, then you have to go on aspiring steadily till something does come down. (31-1-1935)

SADHAKA: The rise from the present fall might begin from the silence. For that seems to be the nearest branch I can catch from the ground.

SRI AUROBINDO: Probably you are right.

SADHAKA: It is a condition of sheer darkness. The adverse forces did try to introduce active disturbance—ego, sex, dissatisfaction etc.—but they could not succeed. For, wherever I may be, Mother's protection always follows me. It is there even when I do not or cannot notice it.

SRI AUROBINDO: If it consists in that negation alone—then you have to aspire, get back the full quietude and silence and throw out the invading unconsciousness.

SADHAKA: Even now I am unable to understand my present sadhana. What is the matter with it? —one after another, attacks are persistently coming. Am I pushed into a region of attacks? No sooner do I conquer one than I see already another approaching me!

SRI AUROBINDO: This negation is the very nature of the physical resistance and the physical resistance is the whole base of the denial of the Divine in the world. All in the physical is persistent, obstinate, with a massive force of negation and inertia—if it were not so, sadhana would be extremely cursory. You have to face this character of the physical resistance and conquer it however often it may rise. It is the price of the transformation of the earth-consciousness. (1-2-1935)

SADHAKA: What is exactly meant by negation here?

SRI AUROBINDO: Negation of deeper peace, Mother's presence, self etc. as opposed to a positive attack of lust, ego, vital turmoil etc. (1-2-1935)

NAGIN DOSHI

## WORK THY WILL

WHOLLY Thine I long to be,  
A bark afloat on moonwhite streams;  
Bound for the bosom of the vast Sea,  
Mother Divine, Mother of dreams.

The morn drew nigh, away the night flew—  
Bridged was the gulf gaping and grim;  
Free I would wing the immense blue  
And seek out suns of wonder a-brim.

Bestow Thy love celestial ever more,  
At dusk arise like a beckoning star;  
Swing open at dawn the secret door—  
Kisses of Thy rays my treasure dear.

Only Thy jewels I would store in my soul,  
In exquisite songs of rapture reveal;  
Offered I would awake anew and whole,  
Thy ecstasy in every life-throb feel.

For other brightnesses care I little,  
I would set aflame the shadowy night;  
I crave not things fleeting and brittle;  
Work Thy will, Mother of delight!

ROBI GUPTA

## WHY I AM HERE\*

BORN in the year 1884 as an Austrian German, I grew up in that transition-period between the nineteenth and twentieth century, which proved so fateful for Central Europe. In the nineteenth century the development of Western culture, which had begun with the Renaissance and Reformation, had reached its culmination: Francis Bacon's doctrine that only scientific knowledge, based on the data of the senses and intellectual activity, is true knowledge, was generally approved. The ruling spirit of the age denied the existence of a spiritual reality and the possibility of contact with it. In an unaccountable infatuation the European intellectual of the nineteenth century had become blind to the sublime tradition of the spiritual knowledge in mediaeval culture. The Catholic Church is the guardian of that tradition. She is, as Nietzsche put it, "the heiress of ancient mysterious Asia and the secret of Eastern contemplation". After the Reformation had broken her temporal and weakened her spiritual power, there remained what Nietzsche called "that heap of ruins" of the old religiously based culture of Europe. Only upon these ruins could come into being what is rightly called "modern sensate culture" (P.A. Sorokin): "The West". To render innocuous its further impact on the whole world is the problem of this age.

The spiritual reality and the possibility to come in contact with it were denied. The ancient doctrine of the "mystical Path", the "Secret of the Path" (as M. Buber has called it) was forgotten. The Westerner became wholly taken up in the research and mastering of the outer world until he lost contact with his inner world. With the growing specialization of the objective sciences (already Goethe had complained about the "boundless multifariousness of the natural sciences") traditional metaphysical philosophy, the "universal science" (Plato), lost its significance too. By positivism, the philosophy of the time, metaphysics, and all the more theology, were looked upon as bygone overcome phases of the development of mankind. Having also lost his faith in pure reason "which works in its own right", the nineteenth-century Westerner had locked himself up in a house with the five windows of his senses, and the flat roof of a reason "which only deals with sense data and frames concepts on their basis". He lived as it were on the ground-floor. In the beginning of the

<sup>1</sup> This is one of the essays in response to the call of the *Sahitya Parishad* of the Sri Aurobindo Ashram for personal documents on the suggested theme.

twentieth century he was to discover, to his utmost surprise, that this house of his soul has also a "basement" (psycho-analysis) and a "paranormal mezzanin" (parapsychology). He may further discover that the structure of the human soul contains also, as Aldous Huxley has put it, "a purely spiritual second floor having no roof, but communicating directly (if the rubbish and lumber of egotism can be cleared away) with the open sky". In this way the Westerner might regain that spiritual universality which once inwardly connected the Catholic middle ages with the East; hereby he might also regain the basis for a mutual real understanding with the East. For as S. Radhakrishnan rightly observes in his article *L'ancienne Idée Asiatique de l'homme* (*India*, Année IIIième, No. 2): "The Asiatic vision of man is not very different from the ancient European vision of man"... "The essential points of the Asiatic view of life, which we also find in the grand spiritual tradition of the Occident, give us the certainty of a new World, which already looms ahead on the horizon".

With the denial of the existence of a spiritual world and man's potential capacity to come in contact with it, the seers and sensitives, the "eyes and antennae of mankind", lost their high ranking position in the traditional social hierarchy. Their place was taken over by the politician and technician. Applied science, that specific product of modern Western civilization, capacitates the technician to set up and manage that gigantic technocratic apparatus, which enables an even relatively small but fanatically decided political minority to usurp and wield political power. (This is the reason of the high estimation which the technician enjoys in totalitarian states.) This reversal in the social hierarchy is the result and expression of that *Umwertung aller Werte* in our time, but not the one which Nietzsche had postulated....

This is my general mental background. I could not refrain from trying to sketch it however summarily. Only against this background can I try to analyze in the following my personal problem. Having grown up in a transition-period, I had to try to comprehend and meet the changes in the whole outlook on life, brought about, above all, by this technical age. Being specifically un-gifted for technology, I went up for a supplementary examination in Latin and Greek in order to gain admittance to the University after having undergone the final examination of the "*Realschule*", a type of secondary school which only qualifies for the Institute for higher technical studies.

More and more technocracy began to dominate even every-day life. I had to find my "response" to its "challenges", my inner attitude to the oppressing almost overwhelming power of the objective world around. Un-numbered books have analyzed this unique phenomenon of technocracy. Many measures have been proposed to meet its disastrous effect on man's inborn dignity in bearing, gait and manners. It would seem that "The law", which

reconciles the "law of man" with the "law of thing", the laws Emerson called "discrete and irreconciled", is not yet found. On the contrary: the "law of thing", having become "mad", increasingly "unkings" the man.

A second "challenge", to which I had to find the "response", is modern "Sport". I myself was always interested in "Sport" and every form of "physical culture". But this didn't make me blind to the fact that modern "Sport" with its over-evaluation of achievement and record has no inner connection with the old traditional culture, especially that of Central Europe. Its spirit is pronouncedly "Western". Critics of culture have repeatedly pointed to the fact that, for instance, the modern Olympic Games—in contrast with the ancient—have no sanction whatever in the traditional religion and culture of Europe. Moreover, even under the best specimens of physical education by "Sport", I couldn't find anyone who embodied my ideal of physical perfection, namely: Masterly control over the breath, over that "realm between soul and body", as Schopenhauer called that mysterious spiritual, psychical and physical function. In its pursuit of records Western "Sport" has not even guessed the existence of the secret of breath. It knows breath only as a physiological function....

In connection with the proper subject of this composition it is not necessary to enter into further details. Personally I found in Yoga the "physical" culture, which has the right sanction, because it is linked up and integrated into the ancient doctrine of "the Path", leading to man's definite and real end in life: Union with the Absolute. It is, as W.R. Miles (Institute of Human Relations, Yale University) said, just "this combination of a practical physical development and discipline with a mystical objective which it is its purpose to facilitate (which) has served to attract world-wide attention to Yoga". In this discipline I found fully developed what in the catholic "Yoga" does not seem to be systematically worked out.

In order to sum up: Modern applied science, technocracy, based on it, "Sport", at least its *mise-en-scène*, I cannot integrate with my general outlook on life. The writers I consulted rather affirm me in my view. With few exceptions they ascribe to technocracy man's "massification" and "robotisation" in this age: "Technocracy has destroyed man's image", says N. Berdyaev. And is it not strange that technocracy arose and developed mainly in the countries of protestantism with its doctrine of the thorough destruction of God's image in man by the original sin? According to this doctrine, man after the Fall was left without "a spark" of spiritual vigour so that he was in spiritual matters like "a stone" or "a log". Is it not quite comprehensible that man then applied all his psychical energy to the temporal world? This doctrine is quite inconsistent with the ancient universal doctrine of the possibility of the "yogic"

approach to God which forms the common basis of the above-mentioned spiritual unity between the East and the old catholic European culture. Mediaeval mysticism is, as has been proved by Comparative Religion, inwardly allied with the Indian doctrines of redemption—an affinity which separates them distinctly from biblical (protestant) Christianity.

With the weakening of the spiritual power of the Catholic Church its doctrine of the “mystical Path” fell into the background, superseded more and more by protestant and later “modern” “agnosticism”. Ultimately, to put it briefly, God was not even recognized as “regulative idea”. But it is, as C.G. Jung says, very important to recognize His existence at least as “regulative idea”, because otherwise “man makes something else to God, mostly something which is quite insufficient, anything that such an ‘enlightened’ consciousness may hatch”. If God, the “Coincidence of opposites”, is not consciously recognized, then the opposites will be made absolute, for man cannot live without having found a focus for his whole psychic energy. This seems the explanation for the modern idolizing of technics.

Considering the aforesaid, I am fully aware that this brief ratiocination can be considered as the rationalization of my instinctive rejection of technocracy, caused by the whole sphere in which I grew up and an inborn lack of talent for technology. Moreover, in general, how can the anti-technocrats justify their disregard for technocracy, considering it to be the typical product of the “homo faber et economicus”, if they make use of all the comfortableness made possible by it?

In this conflict I came across the philosophy of Sri Aurobindo. Already after the reading of one book, procured with great difficulty, I felt: Here speaks one who wholeheartedly recognizes applied physical science and technics, but has not lost the communication with the supra-physical world. I was touched by his analysis of the causes of the “Crisis of our Age”, written in a masterly language. He lays his finger on the vital malady of our time: The discord of man’s outer and inner development in this technical age. The latter has not kept abreast with the former. This scientific-technical age has led to a “downright childish narrowing of man’s inner field of vision”; to the paralysis of his vigour for religious faith, in general to that morbid passivity towards the impressions and spurs of the objective world around. Many Western thinkers have given the same diagnosis.

However, the right diagnosis of a malady is only the first step for its healing. And here it is where the Western thinker fails. He sees, it is true, the relativity of all those opposites (absolute technics, state, science, economy etc.), idolized by the too bustling politicians and matter-of-fact-men. But, being all the same a child of this technically mechanized time, he himself has lost the “creative inner

## WHY I AM HERE

centre". He himself has lost the capacity of his mediaeval forefathers "to descend into oneself" "in order to ascend to God", as *De Imitatione Christi* says.

But this modern thinker sees intuitively—and this is of the greatest importance—that here, in introspection, meditation and prayer, alone is the way out of the present commonly felt critical deadlock. He feels the necessity to learn that "highest art", the necessity of the "yogic" way to revitalization and growth of his inner life. From the days of the "*Schule der Weisheit*" of Count Keyserling in the twenties the call for a Yoga which takes account of the exigencies of this time could be heard.

In this situation I, as so many Western "seekers", consulted the many books about Yoga, some of them alas written by writers who felt that this sort of literature would have a ready market. But although I could find in the best of them the right "physical" culture, none of them could liberate me from my antithetic attitude to technics. They rather even confirmed me in my attitude of escapism in this "modern" life.

But I hope to find that liberation in the study of Sri Aurobindo's great life-works: *The Life Divine* and *The Synthesis of Yoga*. We, my wife and I, consider it a peculiarly auspicious fate to have got the permission to stay as guests in this Ashram, to breathe the spirit of this community, which strives for the realization of the ideal of a spiritual life, as visualized and created by Sri Aurobindo and the Mother.

I have found here also the long-sought guru under whose excellent guidance I can continue my daily training of the asanas, begun seventeen years ago.

A. BAUDISCH



# MATTER AND LIFE

## A SCRUTINY OF SCIENTIFIC OPINIONS

(Continued from the issue of December 5, 1954)

### IV

(2)

To buttress our vitalistic and finalistic reading of evolutionary facts and to give another facet to von Bertalanffy's dramatic presentation of life the creative artist's horizontal richness and vertical novelty, we may quote a passage from *Time the Refreshing River* by another materialist in biology, now a dialectical one rather than a mechanical or an organismic: Joseph Needham. "Modern biology," says Needham, "is nothing if not evolutionary. There are now no reasonable grounds for doubt that during successive ages after the first appearance of life upon the earth it took up a succession of new forms, each more highly organized than the last. This is not gainsaid in any way by the existence of highly adaptive parasitism and retrogression in certain types of plants and animals, nor by the fact that a hundred disadvantageous mutants may have to be produced for every one which is of evolutionary value. As we rise in the evolutionary scale from the viruses and protozoa to the social primates, there is

- 1) a rise in the number of parts and envelopes of the organism and the complexity of their morphological forms and geometrical relations;
- 2) a rise in the effectiveness of the control of their functions by the organism as a whole;
- 3) a rise in the degree of independence of the organism from its environment, involving diversification and extension of range of the organism's activities;
- 4) a rise in the effectiveness with which the individual organism carries out its purpose of survival and reproduction, including the power of moulding its environment."

The key-note of Needham's passage is "evolutionary progress". How in terms of materialism one can explain so definite a rise in living values is a standing puzzle. Materialism would be expected to say that the rise, if any, is purely accidental and without significance. Matter, as conceived by materialism, can only show greater and greater complexity. But mere complexity is not progress. To be progress, increase in complexity must be coupled with increase in effi-

ciency and there can be no efficiency without an aimed function to be performed; this means that matter which is not credited with any aimed function by the materialists cannot be efficient in any sense, leave aside its rising in efficiency. It is doubtful whether matter, *qua* matter, can be said even to keep increasing in complexity. No doubt, electrons get arranged into an atom, atoms build up a molecule, molecules combine into a colloid; but it is equally the case that a colloid breaks up into molecules, a molecule separates into atoms, an atom disintegrates into electrons. We cannot affirm that it is typical of matter to become more and more complex. As Kapp remarks, "Material particles tend as much to fly apart as to come together. The only general way in which we can describe their behaviour is to say that they fly about." They get associated when the conditions are favourable for association and they get dissociated when the conditions are favourable for dissociation; they sometimes adopt intricate-looking configurations and sometimes simple-looking ones. "There is," to quote Kapp again, "exactly the same justification for propounding a law of simplicity as for propounding a law of complexity." There is nothing in the nature of matter, *qua* matter, to conduce to more and more complex formations. On naturalistic grounds the contention popular in many quarters that matter tends to fall into ever more complex wholes is unadulterated nonsense.

Even if we consider matter in the phase dubbed by von Bertalanffy "an open system in a steady state" and deduce mathematically that under certain conditions its entropy content can decrease unlike as in a closed system and that complexity and order can increase in it, we cannot declare that it is in the nature of matter to fall more and more into such a system. Besides, no such system exhibits these progressive qualities except in an organism. Nor can the fact that matter of a certain degree of complexity grew organic at a particular time in the remote past be used by a materialist to prove that it reached this degree as a result of its nature to increase in complexity. When this degree was reached in one or more places, other places were as surely losing complexity; for, at any given time, it is, according to physicists, the nature of matter to move towards a maximum of entropy and realise further and further what they call disorganization—that is, conversion of energy into a form unutilisable for work.

Does materialism alter its essence if it is entitled dialectical? Dialectical materialism holds that any state of matter sets up by its own nature an opposite state and that the two opposites—thesis and antithesis—join in a new whole of synthesis. It also avers that quantitative increase in change creates at a certain point a qualitative difference and that therefore new levels are organized. The majority of materialistic scientists—in other words, all non-Marxists who are inclined to be materialists in science—dispute the doctrines of dialectical materialism. But even if we grant truth to these doctrines, what we have is nothing

more than new levels—a novelty of synthesis and a novelty of qualities. But there is no intrinsic implication of progress in such production. Though perhaps an increase in complexity would be implied, such increase, as we have already noted, cannot constitute progress in any valid connotation unless it is coupled with increase in efficiency—that is to say, with an ever better performance of aimed functions such as no materialist, dialectical or organismic or mechanical, ascribes to matter. Further, an increase in efficiency leading on to a creature like man who embodies mind *par excellence* in relation to the rest of the organic world and who is regarded as at least the initial stage if not the actual realisation of evolutionary fulfilment—an increase in efficiency of this sort which makes mind the most important and valuable fact in the universe goes ill with the assertion central to all materialism that matter and not mind or even life is basic.

We may be told at this point: “Needham as well as von Bertalanffy deludes himself in getting an impression of evolutionary progress. Are they supported by other biological materialists?” We have made an admiring reference to Simpson, author of *The Meaning of Evolution*, and to Julian Huxley who wrote *Evolution: The Modern Synthesis*, as two of the ablest biologists with a materialistic penchant. Well, what do they have to tell us?

Huxley, summing up his attitude in an essay on evolution in his *Man in the Modern World*, says that most of the results of evolution are not progressive, much is mere change, much else, though advance, is one-sided advance, doomed to come eventually to a *cul-de-sac*, but a narrow thread of true progress does run through the whole web of change. And he goes on to argue that by progress he does not mean progress merely from a human standpoint. “Progress can be defined biologically in a perfectly objective way as denoting increased harmony of construction, increased capacity for knowledge and for feeling, and increased control over nature, increased independence of outer change.” And he adds: “Man happens to be at the top of the trend towards progress.” In further elucidation of this statement we may quote the following words of his: “There has been only one progressive line in the whole of evolution—that which has led in its later stages through fish, amphibian, reptile and mammal to man; for it appears established that all other lines have come to an evolutionary dead-end well before the later part of the tertiary period. Thus, in the broad view, evolution as a process consists of one line of unlimited progress among thousands of long-range trends towards specialisation, each of these latter in turn beset with a frill, so to speak, of thousands of short-range diversifications producing separate species.”

On man, Huxley writes: “To assert that man is the highest product of evolution to date is a statement of simple biological fact. There are, however,

some other points concerning man's position relative to evolutionary progress that are less obvious. First is the curious fact that the human species is now, in all probability, the sole repository of any possible future progress for life.... Second, with the evolution of man the character of progress becomes altered. With human consciousness, values and ideals appeared on earth for the first time. The criterion of further progress must include the degree by which those ideal values are satisfied."

What are we to make of all these statements? If, surveying a mass of proliferating and changing life over millennia, biology can demonstrate with objective and non-anthropomorphic criteria that there is such a thing as progress and that this progress has driven in the direction of man's appearance and that man is the highest product of evolution and is the sole trustee of further advance of life and that life's advance culminates in the quest for satisfaction of ideal values, are we not justified in considering as capitally sensible the hypothesis of a supra-material reality essentially purposive in character and with a drive towards ideal values, acting through physico-chemical and "accidental" factors and winning somehow over their colossal obscurity and obstruction and being able to do both these things because it is itself those factors in one aspect of its existence, an aspect self-willed but genuinely accepted afterwards in all its grim possibilities of challenging the original power whose paradoxical phase it is? Is not such a hypothesis more truly explanatory than the "blind forces" that Huxley, misguided by a falsely scientific scruple, posits as sufficient?

In passing, we may remark on the scruple on Huxley's part, which he considers scientific. It is exemplified in his statement approvingly cited by Simpson that the vitalists' ascribing evolution to an *élan vital* no more explains the history of life than would ascribing its motion to an *élan locomotif* explain the operation of a steam engine. No doubt, the utmost effort must be made to discover the physico-chemical terms of a scientific problem, but the analogy Huxley draws is superlatively jejune. With all the physico-chemical terms available for a steam-engine, its operation cannot be explained without an *élan locomotif* in the form of the engine-maker's idea and aim as well as the engine-driver's control and direction. The history of life is concerned with organisms which are systems not ever inferior to a steam-engine but immeasurably superior and more versatile, systems including the best of a mechanism and at the same time far exceeding it in efficient unity no less than in multiplicity of function.

Let us now turn to Simpson. He is more cautious than Huxley at the outset, yet he cannot help ending on as positive a note. We may summarise his position by linking together several passages: "...General and objective criteria of progress are available and corresponding sorts of progress exist in the history of life.

These fail to designate man's ancestry as a central line, and indeed fail to reveal any one such line....There is no criterion of progress by which progress can be considered a *universal* phenomenon of evolution....All-over progress, and particularly progress toward any goal or fixed point, can no longer be considered as characteristic of evolution or even as inherent in life. Progress does exist in the history of life, but it is of many different sorts and each sort occurs separately in many different lines. One sort of progress in structure and function that stands out as particularly widespread and important is increasing awareness of the life situation of the individual organism and increasing variety and sureness of appropriate reactions to this. Among the many different lines that show progress in this respect, the line leading to man reaches much the highest level yet developed. By most other criteria of progress, also, man is at least among the higher animals and a balance of considerations fully warrant considering him definitely the highest of all....It is a fact that man is an animal, but it is not a fact that he is nothing but an animal....Man has certain basic diagnostic features which set him off most sharply from any other animal and which have involved other developments not only increasing this sharp distinction but also making it what amounts to a difference in kind and not only a relative difference of degree.... Even when viewed within the framework of the animal kingdom and judged by criteria of progress applicable to that kingdom as a whole and not peculiar to man, man is the highest animal....It is still false to conclude that man is nothing but the highest animal, or the most progressive product of organic evolution. He is also a fundamentally new sort of animal and one in which, although organic evolution continues on its way, a fundamentally new sort of evolution has also appeared. The basis of this new sort of evolution is a new sort of heredity, the inheritance of learning. This sort of heredity appears modestly in other animals and even lower in the animal kingdom, but in man it has incomparably fuller development and it combines with man's other characteristics unique in degree with a result that cannot be considered unique only in degree but must also be considered unique in kind....Man's knowledge that he exists is, at the least, more conscious and particular than that of any other animal. Man alone knows that he has evolved and is still doing so. Man alone places himself in a conceptual framework of space and time. Man possesses purpose and exercises deliberate choice to a unique degree, even if, indeed, these capacities can be said to be the same in kind in any other animals. It is most improbable that any other animal has more than an inchoate or largely instinctual sense of values, while in man this is normally conscious, orderly and controlled."

In face of these cumulatively wide and far-reaching admissions of evolutionary progress uniquely culminating in man in spite of a doubt whether man's

ancestry can be said to be a central line and indeed whether there is any such line, Simpson whose outlook here is in essentials practically the same as Huxley's strikes one also as arriving at a huge *reductio ad absurdum* in his materialism. He keeps railing at vitalistic and finalistic theories as being obscurantist, evasive, remote from causalism, and à propos of man he writes: "Man is the result of a purposeless and materialistic process that did not have him in mind. He was not planned.... Purpose and plan are not characteristic of organic evolution and are not a key to any of its operations. But purpose and plan are characteristic of the new evolution, because man has purpose and he makes plans. Here purpose and plan do definitely enter into evolution, as a result and not as a cause of the processes seen in the long history of life. The purposes and plans are ours, not those of the universe, which displays convincing evidence of their absence." Simpson's intellect, acute though it is in many respects in the field of purely biological discussion, seems to work queerly in this general semi-philosophical argument. To say that purpose and plan are the cause of the evolutionary process is considered irrational non-causalistic ignorance-covering finalism or vitalism which is regarded as an unscientific theory because purpose and plan are held to be not "evident" in or "characteristic" of organic evolution before man's appearance. But to say that lack of purpose and plan is the cause of the appearance of man who purposes and plans and after whose appearance purpose and plan are found to be "evident" in and "characteristic" of further organic evolution is considered quite rational causalistic and knowledge-revealing materialism which is regarded as a scientific theory. Surely this is logic standing on its head. If the most important product of evolution—the most important from even a standpoint of biological objectivity—and the one through whom the main, if not the sole, evolutionary progress in future will be made is distinguished by purposing and planning, is it not more logical, more in harmony with factual evidence, to take this product as the key to the secret of evolution and read in the long historical organic process a hidden purposive and planning power which at last emerges, through obstacles and envelopments, with some of its wonderful potencies to the surface? A finalism of this kind does not deny the existence of randomness and hence the randomness which is indeed there is accounted for. Simpson's theory does not at all account for the purpose and plan which are actual in man and seem on a sweeping general vision of evolution to be a subtle potent current in what precedes him.

Simpson may be excused for having a grouse against certain forms of finalism as well as vitalism: no defence, however, can be made of his being so short-sighted as to miss the imperative need of some form or other of both vitalism and finalism. Whatever appears purposeless and planless can be conceived of as purpose and plan suppressed or in abeyance, especially if out of it undeniable

purposing and planning evolve; but to posit as purposeless and planless the origin of a being who undeniably purposes and plans and, in addition, pursues ideals and values is not merely to want something out of nothing but everything out of nothing.

We have now come to a non-materialistic conclusion after weighing all the evidence supplied by materialists: it is actually by their own evidence that we have decided against them. And the broad decision has been reached according to an eminently logical procedure charted by Simpson himself in a moment when he is not ridden by what we have criticised in Huxley as a falsely scientific scruple which *a priori* would rule out as non-explanatory whatever is not physico-chemically describable. Simpson says: "Although the metaphysical cannot be directly investigated by the methods of science, its results may be. It is, indeed, one of the greatest values of our present subject that it can serve as a means of testing the fundamental philosophies of materialism, vitalism, and finalism. Vitalism and finalism involve elements postulated as beyond the reach of purely material scientific investigation. Yet the truth of these philosophies would involve material consequences in the history of life. The investigation of these possible consequences is within the scope of scientific method, which therefore can provide evidence on which to base a choice among materialism, vitalism, and finalism, as well as among the variety of particular theories that have been elaborated within the framework of each of these philosophies. Conviction as to the essential truth of materialism need not, then, be the result of bias or of the limitations of the scientific method, but may be the result of careful evaluation of evidence. A scientific bias cheerfully confessed is the belief that the results of such evaluation are likely to be nearer the truth than are the inclinations of personal preference or the traditions of a less knowledgeable and less critical past."

Quite so. But, while Simpson chooses with a keen mind several such phenomena of evolution as should provide particular crucial evidence of this sort, and sets forth a fairly impressive case for materialism as against certain kinds of vitalism and finalism, he fails to plumb the significance of life's horizontal exuberance and vertical inventiveness and of man's place in the evolutionary scheme and to formulate any argument likely to meet in anticipation the vitalistic finalism which we have sponsored and which can assimilate to its own advantage Simpson's own case for materialism.

We may, then, regard as completely justified the verdict for a supra-material reality on the evidence of biological science. Since biology is, properly speaking, the study of life-phenomena we have called this reality a life-force, but in view of the mind-phenomena that increasingly come into our purview with the rise of life in the evolutionary scale we should be more correct if we took mind rather

than life as basic. Some might urge that mind is just a development of life, but, inasmuch as man the mental being is acknowledged by biologists to be a unique evolute with whom the character of evolutionary progress becomes altered, mind must be distinguished from life. The distinctive traits of life are things like growth, metabolism, propagation, regulation, tissue-regeneration, adaptation, response to stimuli, insurgent idiosyncrasy and, central to them all, organic unity. In organic unity we have mind most vividly translated into life-terms, for here are both harmonising purpose and integrating individuality. Mind-terms themselves are recognisable in their own rights when in an organism's behaviour these two ingredients of organic unity manifest as things like instinctive planning, "perceptual logic", reconditioned reflex, experimental adjustment of means to an end, individual leadership, concerted action. In whatever form they may be found, they are the mental strain in organic evolution, the spearhead, as it were, of that which ultimately emerges in a unique shape as technical and artistic creativeness, conceptual systematisation, conscience, social communion, intuition, sense of the Holy and, central to all of them, self-awareness with its possibilities of "soul"-experience. Thus there is more than one "depth-phenomenon" behind the "surface-phenomenon" of matter. A plane of mind no less than a plane of life must be declared to exist together with the material plane.

However, to render interaction possible, we should say that just as matter is an involved form of life so also life is an involved form of mind. That would explain the steps of the evolution—the advent of explicit vital processes from the material and of explicit mental processes from the vital, both advents helped, of course, by pressure from the planes where life and mind are each a separate uninvolved force and from where originally the precipitation of something of life and mind into matter-form took place and also the reverse push bringing about life's and mind's emergence was originally planted.

One mistake must be avoided. To give mind the basic status and to make life its involved condition and, through life's involution in matter, matter too the same at a further remove is not subjectivism in the ordinary philosophical sense, for it does not reduce matter to the individual's sensation and perception and idea. Although it opens up the possibility of the individual consciousness's partaking in a consciousness which is cosmic and by which matter is not experienced as an extraneous foreign substance, it asserts merely the relation between the different grades of universal being.

Here we must halt if we are to remain within the biological sphere. A further step in one direction would carry us into psychology and the field of the extra-sensory if not of the mystical as well. A further step in the opposite direction would bear us into physics and the field of relativity theory and quantum theory. In an earlier series of scientific essays we have already tackled



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the problem of consciousness and the brain, explored the implications of extra-sensory perception, touched on the individual and cosmic subliminal and stopped at the threshold of the mystical. To round off our scientific survey we should glance at modern physics and examine what it has to reveal in the question of the material and the supra-material. We have spoken of interaction between the former and the latter and designated the one as an involution of the other. Would the findings of modern physics elucidate our idea and show matter to be such as would not contradict, even though it may not directly prove, our conception of it as diminished life and mind? An affirmative answer would be eminently in order after demonstrating biologically, as we have already done, that, if matter is held to be basic, life and *a fortiori* mind cannot be conceived of as mere developments and intensifications of matter.

*(Concluded)*

K. D. SETHNA

## MY QUEEN

I HAVE glimpsed the glory of my Queen  
When moonrafts float on the dancing green;  
I have seen her marvellous face sun-bright  
When Dawn unrolls her phantom light.

I have thrilled with her rippling laughter's sound  
When birds in Heaven take their round  
Across the blue ethereal space  
Tinged with the rainbow colour's grace.

I have heard her footsteps magic wove  
When Spring is sweet with life and love;  
I have felt her touch of passioned height  
Dissolving earth's horizoned sight.

Her Grace, compelling, covers me  
Midst eddies of the dark-foamed sea;  
A silence fills the storm-rocked waves  
And my heart is drowned in Beauty's caves.

PRITHWI SINGH

## BOOKS IN THE BALANCE

**The Liberator: Sri Aurobindo: India and the World**—by Sisirkumar Mitra. (Jaico Publishing House, pp. 220, Price Rs. 2)

This book by the author of *The Vision of India* is a welcome, timely publication. It should form a chapter of the voluminous history of the freedom movement in India which, I gather, is being sponsored by the Indian Union; for, it treats of a stage in that movement which has hardly been seen in the right perspective and very little understood. From 1905 to 1955 is a far cry. The distance of time and the heat and dust of the different phases of the political agitation have obscured many a factor of primal importance, and we have almost forgotten who and what were the creative forces, the originative agencies, the real shaping influences behind the first burst and the subsequent heavings of the national being. "History very seldom records the things that were decisive but took place behind the veil; it records the show in front of the curtain." How many of us, for instance, remember now with anything approaching precision what great seeds of creative thought, what fission-forces of living ideas the lion-hearted Swami Vivekananda sowed in the soil of his country's consciousness? True, he led no political movement, he drew up no economic programmes and launched no direct attacks upon the powers of oppression; but what would India have been without him? What would have been even India's politics without his galvanising impact upon her whole being? Even today, where is there any movement in India, political, educational, social, moral, religious or spiritual, that is not derived from his creative thought, or at least cannot be traced to his quickening inspiration? But the inspiration was subtle, pervasive, invisibly transforming, like the air we breathe or the light which gives us life, and, therefore, apt to be ignored in any popular assessment of material results. The most potent forces of life are the forces of creative thought, and the greatest benefactors of humanity are they who bring new thoughts, new aspirations, new dynamic ideas into its consciousness and inspire it to exalting endeavours—they who widen and illumine its inner horizons and point it beyond the immediate present to the opening glories of the future.

Sri Aurobindo's contribution to the freedom movement of India can be truly appraised only when what he has sown is fully reaped. His countrymen were fired by his patriotic spirit, his ardent nationalism, his unstinted self-

sacrifice and, above all, by the height and splendour of his creative thought; but very few caught the deep implications of his utterances, fewer had any insight into the true nature of his vision. Like all prophets, he was much in advance of his times. In 1907 he said, "We advocate the struggle for Swaraj, first, because Liberty is in itself a necessity of national life; secondly, because Liberty is the first indispensable condition of national development; thirdly, because in the next great stage of human progress it is not a material but a spiritual, moral and psychical advance that has to be made, and for this a free Asia and in Asia a free India must take the lead, and Liberty is therefore worth striving for for the world's sake. India must have Swaraj in order to live; she must have Swaraj in order to live well and happily; she must have Swaraj in order to live for the world...for the *spiritual and intellectual benefit of the human race*".<sup>1</sup> These words must have sounded—forty-eight years ago—like the extravagant hopes of an idealist dreamer or a visionary. Read and pondered today in the light of the present developments, they ring prophetic. Again when he said in his Uttarpara speech that God had given him the *adesha* "to speak to your nation always this word, that it is for the Sanatana Dharma that they arise, it is for the world and not for themselves that they arise," his words must have sounded so mysterious and enigmatical! Even today how many of us can fully grasp the truth they contain? The Indian nation rising for the world! What does it really mean? And he declared in the same speech, "I said that this movement is not a political movement and that nationalism is not politics but a religion, a creed, a faith. I say it again today, but I put it in another way. I say no longer that nationalism is a creed, a religion, a faith; I say that it is the Sanatana Dharma which for us is nationalism. This Hindu nation was born with the Sanatana Dharma, with it it moves and with it it grows. When the Sanatana Dharma declines, then the nation declines, and if the Sanatana Dharma were capable of perishing, with the Sanatana Dharma it would perish." Who could have thought then, who can think even today, of equating nationalism with Sanatana Dharma and Sanatana Dharma with an all-embracing, all-transforming, dynamic, universal spirituality capable of redeeming and regenerating mankind? Unless we understand the full import of the words Sanatana Dharma and nationalism as used by Sri Aurobindo, we shall not be able to understand the meaning and message of his life. But once we understand it rightly, we have the clue to the superlative significance of his work and we cannot but contemplate with wondering admiration the sublime comprehensive vision of the prophet-patriot who knew

<sup>1</sup> Weekly *Bande Mataram*, dated 7-7-1907. Cf. "She (India) has always existed for humanity and not for herself and it is for humanity and not for herself that she must be great."

that the destiny of his country was indissolubly linked with the destiny of humanity, and that the Light that burned in the heart of India was the Light that would one day illumine the whole world. What he saw in his early youth was the supreme truth of India's resurgence which the future will vindicate in all its rainbow richness. His whole life was of a piece, uniform in its inner aspiration and achievement, though multiform and versatile in its outer expression. To him God was one, the universe was one, humanity was one and spirituality was one—he did not recognise any essential difference between one religion and another, one country and another, and one nation and another, though he respected the individuality of each. He stressed the spiritual role of India, not because India was his land of birth, but because his mystic vision saw her as the land of Light, as the birth-place of the new evangel of the Divine Life on earth, as the teacher and leader of mankind in the ways of the Spirit.

As regards the political aspects of Sri Aurobindo's nationalism, Sisirkumar shows that most of the fundamentals of the later Indian politics were anticipated and advocated by Sri Aurobindo. He stood for absolute autonomy free from foreign control and declared that his ideal of Swaraj involved no hatred of any other nation, or of the administration which was then established in this country. He advocated passive resistance and even non-cooperation with the British Government. "The policy of passive resistance," he said, "was evolved partly as a necessary complement of self-help, partly as a means of putting pressure on the government. The essence of this policy is the refusal of cooperation so long as we are not admitted to a substantial share and an effective control in legislation, finance and administration. Just as 'No representation, no taxation' was the watch-word of the American constitutional agitation in the eighteenth century, so 'No control, no cooperation' should be the watch-word of our lawful agitation—for constitution we have none—in the twentieth. We sum up this refusal of cooperation in the convenient word boycott, refusal of cooperation in the industrial exploitation of our country, in education, in government, in judicial administration, in the details of official intercourse."<sup>1</sup> All this may appear to many of us rather surprising today, but it actually formed the heart of the politics preached by Sri Aurobindo in 1907. Mazzini's light always gleams from behind the shadows of Cavour and Garibaldi.

There is, however, one thing which sharply distinguishes Sri Aurobindo's politics from that of the latest phases of the national struggle and which Sisirkumar brings out very instructively. Sri Aurobindo made no fetish of non-violence, for he knew that in the present state of human evolution non-violence was impossible of achievement on a permanent, collective basis. He inculcated

<sup>1</sup> Speeches of Sri Aurobindo.

no hatred of the British—it was absolutely incompatible with his spiritual ideal, outlook and temperament—but he held that in a political extremity a subject nation, groaning under the heels of oppression and hovering between life and death, has every right to whatever weapon it can lay hold on. This does not mean that violence has to be preached and practised in season and out and that peace has not to be aspired after and achieved. India proclaimed to the world the message of Ahimsa five hundred years before the birth of Christ and peace (shanti) is the recurrent refrain of all her spiritual invocations and prayers. Nowhere in the world has peace been so persistently and so intensely yearned for. But Indian wisdom knew that repression is not the cure for violence nor peace the easy prize of a strenuous ethical thinking and willing. “Peace”, says Sri Aurobindo, “is a part of the highest ideal, but it must be spiritual or at the very least psychological in its basis; without a change in human nature it cannot come with any finality. If attempted on any other basis like a mental principle of the gospel of Ahimsa, it will fail, and even may leave things worse than before.”

Sisirkumar ably explains the double strand in Sri Aurobindo’s conception of liberty. Political liberty, according to Sri Aurobindo, is the first requisite, but spiritual liberty is the real and ultimate achievement, without which political liberty is not of much abiding value. What will India do with the political freedom she has gained? Will she use it as a means to recover, enlarge and enrich her spiritual heritage and serve the world with it, or only, as the other nations have been using their freedom, to forge new fetters for her own soul and forfeit her high glorious destiny? That was the problem which preoccupied Sri Aurobindo in the post-political period of his life, and Sisirkumar is perfectly justified in calling him the liberator, inasmuch as it was he who first roused the whole nation with his clarion call and gave it a clear vision of its goal, and then directed its eyes towards the greater, ultimate, spiritual freedom which alone can enable it to lead mankind to the promised land of peace, unity and harmony.

On the loom of faith and with the shuttle of devotion, Sisirkumar has woven an excellent fabric of facts—a piece of history which reads like an absorbing story, an impassioned and inspiring saga.

RISHABHCHAND

## NEW ROADS

### BOOK III

(Continued)

#### THE MIGHTY MOTHER OF THE WORLDS

Time played the heavy laggard of the hours  
And pressed upon the pulse of circumstance  
To march with giant tread the halls of Night.  
Mind seemed but half aware of mighty things  
That strove to find embodiment on earth;  
But mind still felt the heavy weight of Time.  
Bowed low beneath the yoke of ages past,  
The forms and habits struggled to remain  
In a dim lethargic immobility.  
Yet this was Maya or the illusion of Time  
Perceived by the surface consciousness in the brain.  
Behind the veil, behind the appearances  
The march of evolution went apace  
And even took vast leaps towards its aim.  
The truth of the soul knew well the speed of Light,  
Knew well the tempo of eternity.  
The flaming leap of the heart towards its goal,  
The speed of thought breaking the bounds of Time,  
The flash of mind across a universe;  
And this against the pull of Matter's might,  
Against the body's drag upon the hours,  
And the deep inconscient energy of Night.  
Now flesh and blood would bear the new descent.  
In vein and muscle, bone and vibrant nerve,  
Would come the distant whirling of the stars;  
And heaven would fill the body with its Light,  
Create new inroads into Matter's core  
And make of it a happy glad ascent  
Towards new grandeurs of eternity.

## NEW ROADS

No soul would yearn in vain to kiss the heights,  
No heart would long without a sure response;  
No mind or heart aspire to that last Bliss,  
Without the hope of Truth and certainty.  
No shadowy wings would beat against the sun,  
Like mind's illusion of all transient things.  
What man aspired for, that he would achieve  
In measure, need and true capacity;  
Or by a Grace that issued from above,  
That cleared the mortal sky of cloud and gloom.  
So in the midst of Night a radiance shone  
In gratitude, sincerity and love.  
There was no time for cavil or pretence,  
No brave heroic gesture would amaze  
Without the seal of Her authority.  
The ego burned with every boasting word,  
And every vaunting deed was as a flame  
That blew back on the face of circumstance.  
And even mind could not afford a cloak  
To hide the ego in obscurity.  
If man aspired to God and God alone  
He stood in the circle of sincerity  
And braved the radiance of immortal suns.

When darkness fell upon this human world  
There came the stars to light eternity;  
And with them came the sense of worlds afar,  
The first wide contact whence with the mortal eye  
Man felt within himself the great Alone  
Wherein could dwell the cosmic worlds to come.  
From Night and Silence was the earth conceived  
And all that lives came from an under-sleep—  
The seed of Light lives in the womb of Night;  
The spark of life in deep inconscient seas  
Wakes to the call of immortality.  
So in the desert loneliness of soul  
Was born the wonder of the perfect Rose—  
A smile born of sweet innocence to thrill  
The heart to waken or the soul to know  
The radiant Truth that is Reality.  
The quivering ecstasy within the seed



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Foretells a life in future dawns to be,  
For Nature is Her own Philosopher  
And man is left to marvel at her ways.  
From wonder all Philosophy was born  
And here in wonder must it find its end.  
The bliss of future worlds has touched our souls  
Where lies the Promise of eternity,  
And in our hearts a guest of Light draws near  
To paint the future dawns of certainty;  
A Friend and Helper who inspires our Night,  
One who reminds us of approaching Day,  
A constant Voice, that seems to say: "I come"—  
The ever-longing ardour of the soul  
Which strives to join the radiant peaks of heaven  
To these dull moments of mortality.  
O yea, a thousand times yea let me see  
The unreality in outward things!

Here even in such moments there was flame,  
The poignant leap of inner circumstance  
Was always there if one would only see  
Behind the surface action of the Play.  
Here came together types in human form  
From every phase of life that did aspire  
To something higher than the path they trod,  
The elite who stood on various peaks of mind  
And strove to find a Harmony of Life  
In one high Purpose with a common goal.  
Here was a concentration and a play  
Of all the human types upon the earth,  
Massed for a future world-aspiring Theme  
To change the face of all humanity.  
Here lived a concentration of the soul  
To make a home for future fields of Light.  
Here massed the aspiration of a world,  
A world of human energy that waits  
Upon the sleeping soul of the Divine,  
Like sentinel initiates that stand  
Attendant on the Royal Sarcophagus  
That will awake to immortality.  
Here are those who stand full conscious in the Light,

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Who know their purpose and their destiny;  
And also those whose knowledge is as naught  
Yet grow resplendent with the pure in heart  
And feel the certitude of inner suns.  
One cannot make comparisons with these,  
Each is perfection's possibility  
Poised on the edge of Time and Circumstance—  
To forge a sun-curve in Eternity.  
Each has a place in future worlds to come,  
Each has a part to play upon the stage;  
But only She, the Mother, knows the Play  
Within the cosmic structure, and the Light  
That is to manifest upon the earth.  
She is the Priestess in the silent soul,  
The lone Instructeur in the secret heart,  
The only Guide on these New Roads to God,  
The Universal Mother of the Worlds.  
She leads the vanguard of aspiring souls  
Towards a region of descending Light,  
To distant peaks of pristine purity  
Where now the first rays of the Dawn are seen—  
She lifts our gaze towards these sun-tipped heights  
And brings the Glory nearer to our hearts,  
And hope and courage into sunless days—  
She first will meet the Herald of the Dawn,  
Her Advent is the Emergence into Day;  
And man shall ask: what is this Night of Soul  
But one last look at our own ignorance?

END OF BOOK III

NORMAN DOWSETT

## SRI AUROBINDO INTERPRETATION OF THE GITA

(Continued from the issue of December 5, 1954)

WE now come to the next two essays of Sri Aurobindo entitled "Towards the Supreme Secret" and "The Supreme Secret". The first deals more particularly with verses 49-56 of the last chapter of the Gita, while the second expounds verses 57-66 and 73. In Sri Aurobindo's words, the text "summarises the whole outline and essence in the short space of fifteen verses, lines of a brief and concentrated expression and significance that misses nothing of the kernel of the matter, couched in phrases of the most lucid precision and clearness." It puts up before us a ladder of ascent, but at the same time indicates how we can exceed it; we are not to stop even on the topmost rung. A great *Dharma* firm and sure and wide is laid down before us and we are called upon to climb beyond all *Dharmas* into the infinite spaces, right up to the Supreme Secret.

Of course there is the remedy of the *sannyasi*—to discard the world of *Maya* and retire within the Immutable Brahman. Looked at superficially the first five verses (49-53) seem to recommend this solution of the ascetic. "An understanding without attachment in all things, a soul self-conquered and empty of desire, man attains by renunciation a Supreme Perfection of *Naishkarmya*"—this sounds like an invitation to cut the ego knot instead of loosening it with a steadfast effort. But examined more closely, these five verses are so worded that they are applicable both to inner and outer renunciation. The Teacher does not deny the utility of the withdrawal into the *Akshara*. It can certainly help man to get out of the lower ignorant nature, but cannot take him beyond the higher *sattwic* nature to the Supreme *Prakriti*. It cuts the ego knot forcibly, but, as has been made amply clear, man's inevitable destiny is to pass beyond both the mutable and immutable into blissful and loving union with the Supreme *Purusha*. The essential difference between outer renunciation and inner renunciation has been brought out by the use of two distinct words *Sannyāsa* and *Tyāga* respectively, and *Tyāga* has been pronounced to be definitely superior to *Sannyāsa*. The latter is enamoured of renunciation for its own sake. The former does not demand abstention from action; on the contrary Krishna, we have seen, already tells Arjuna that action is higher than inaction and that he should engage in controlled action; but *Tyāga* insists on an inner quietism. The Divine Teacher goes beyond this inner quietism. He asks, "How having

attained this perfection, one thus attains to the Brahman, hear from Me, O Son of Kunti,—that which is the Supreme concentrated direction of the knowledge.”

The Knowledge here referred to is the knowledge of the Sankhya follower of the exclusive path of Jnana, which has been considered already. For the moment, the Teacher keeps the Yoga of works in the background, he does not even mention it. He comes to the great secret of the Gita by a different way. To be one with all and with the Divine, man must, in the first instance, become the impersonal Brahman. This is the initial movement. The verses we are considering indicate how this is to be done. It is the yoga of the intelligence which will bring about a union of the purified intellect with the pure spiritual substance in man. The whole being will be controlled by the pure intelligence—*Vishuddha Buddhi*, and desire and attachment will completely cease. First rajasic desire, and eventually the highest sattwic desire will altogether vanish. This is the state of *Vairāgya*; the text does not use the word in the usual sense of disgust of life, but in the sense of renunciation of both attraction and repulsion—of both *rāga* and its opposite, *dvesha*. For this, no abandonment of life and its activities is called for but there must be a constant resort to meditation. This practice, this spirit of *tyāga*, will prepare the individual to turn his whole life and action into a oneness with the Divine, an ascent from the lower nature of egoism and division and desire to the supreme spiritual nature—*Parā Prakṛti*, of which the Teacher has spoken to his disciple already. A significant verse gives a definite clue to the meaning of becoming one with the immutable Brahman, “When one has become the Brahman, when one neither grieves nor desires, when one is equal to all beings, then one gets the supreme love and devotion to Me.” In the narrow path of the Yoga of knowledge devotion to a personal Divine can only be a preliminary and lesser movement. According to the Gita, true knowledge—knowledge of “the One who eternally becomes the Many, the Many who in their apparent division are still eternally one, the Highest who displays in us this secret and mystery of existence”—comes only by a highest bhakti. The words of the text are—“*bhaktiyā mām abhijānāti*”, “knows Me by devotion.” “He comes to know Me, who and how much I am, and in all the reality and principles of my being.”

This is the whole experience of the divine mystery in the heart of man—the consciousness of the Supreme Person secretly present everywhere and doing all action. It is thus that the highest devotion and the highest knowledge become one. The Gita's statement is positive in this matter. Through supreme bhakti and supreme jnana, Karma gets its highest significance. The words of the text are, “And by doing also all actions always lodged in Me he attains by my grace the eternal and imperishable status.” All that we do thereafter is done for the Lord seated in the heart of all. About the first eight verses

49-56, Sri Aurobindo says, "These verses carefully read in the light of knowledge already given by the Teacher are a brief, but still a comprehensive indication of the whole essential idea, the entire central method, all the kernel of the complete Yoga of the Gita". Hereafter the divine Teacher proceeds to apply the essence of the teaching already given to the task before his disciple, but in a manner that makes it applicable to all action. This is how Krishna's admonition runs in the text:—Therefore, devoting all thyself to Me, giving up in thy conscious mind all thy actions into Me, resorting to Yoga of the will and intelligence be always one in heart and consciousness with Me....Vain is this thy resolve that in thy egoism thou thinkest saying 'I will not fight,' thy nature shall appoint thee to thy work. What from delusion thou desirest not to do, that helplessly thou shalt do, bound by thy own work born of thy swabhava. The Lord is stationed in the heart of all existence, O Arjuna, and turns them all round and round mounted on a machine by his Maya. In him take refuge in every way of thy being and by his grace thou shalt come to the Supreme peace and the eternal status. "These words", says Sri Aurobindo, "carry in them the innermost heart of this Yoga and lead to its crowning experience...they express the most complete, intimate and living relation possible between God and man". The individual person (Jiva) surrenders himself to the Supreme Person, and delivered from his ego-sense realises that he is one with the Supreme Eternal. It is the Lord himself who receives the surrender and pronounces the final mandate, "Abandon all dharmas, give thyself to Me alone. I will free thee from all sin and evil, grieve not". Again, "Become my-minded, my lover and adorer, a sacrifice to Me, bow thyself to Me, to Me, thou shalt come. This is my pledge and promise to thee, for dear art thou to Me". In a few words, Krishna tells his disciple how, by following his directions, he would get even in this world a life of peace, freedom and the eternal status.

The response of the disciple is explicit. In the words of Sri Aurobindo, "The Vibhuti is ready for the divine life in the human....Destroyed is the illusion of the mind; the soul's memory of its self and its truth concealed so long by the misleading shows and forms of our life has returned to it...all doubt and perplexity gone, it can turn to the execution of the command and do faithfully whatever work for God and the world may be appointed and apportioned to it by the Master of our being." This is verse 73 of the last chapter of the Gita. The Supreme surrender has been made and the disciple has arrived at the door of the Supramental realisation. The Lord of the Yoga will now himself take up the Yoga and lift it to its utmost possible perfection. The special feature of the Gita's teaching is that it does not reject life and action, does not taboo man's duty towards his family in society or country. All these things it admits in their proper places, accepts non-violence as a lofty ideal, recognises the place of

asceticism in the pursuit of spiritual salvation, and yet it goes boldly beyond these high ideals and asserts that they are to be pursued only to be transcended ultimately. Sri Aurobindo's words are explicit, "The vital and material man must accept for his government a religious and social and ideal *dharma* by which, while satisfying desire and interest under right restrictions, he can train and subdue his lower personality and scrupulously attune it to a higher law both of the personal and the communal life.

The Gita has likewise a message to the intellectual and ethical mind, as also a message to the absolute seeker of the Infinite. The highest message is for "the master men, the great spirits, the God-knowers, God-doers, God-lovers who can live in God and for God and do their work joyfully for him in the world, a divine work uplifted above the restless darkness of the human mind and the false limitations of the ego." This is where the divine Teacher takes Arjuna in the last chapter of the scripture—the great Archer agrees joyfully to the bidding of the Lord of the Sacrifice. Henceforth the battle will be the Lord's, his the victory, his the empire.

Śri Aurobindo's last chapter is "The Message of the Gita". Within the narrow limits that we have set to this essay we can give no adequate idea of that brilliant synopsis. We have to be satisfied with a short extract from it.

"This then is the Supreme movement, this complete surrender of your whole self and nature, this abandonment of all dharmas to the Divine who is your highest self, this absolute aspiration of all your members to the supreme spiritual nature. If you can once achieve it, whether at the outset or much later on the way, then whatever you are or were in your outward nature, your way is sure and your perfection inevitable. A supreme presence within you will take up your Yoga and carry it swiftly along the lines of your swabhava to its consummate completion. And afterwards whatever your way of life and mode of action, you will be consciously living, acting and moving in him and the Divine Power will act through you in your every inner and outer motion. This is the supreme way because it is the highest secret and mystery and yet an inner movement progressively realisable by all. This is the deepest and most intimate truth of your real, your spiritual existence."

(Concluded)

C. D. DUTT

## THE FORM IMMACULATE

DOWN months and years, through the dense heart of gloom  
And petals of bloom,  
Through dawns of sense and tendrils of young light,  
The immense folds of night,  
Through the red heart of the crimson sun-rose,  
The moon's blossom of snows,  
I seek, early and late,  
The Form Immaculate.

Through myriad forms that speed past my eye,  
Earth, sea or sky,  
Beyond the wilderness of formlessness,  
Through hurt and happiness,  
Beyond the intellect, the aching heart  
And the rainbow of Art  
I seek, through star or nebula inchoate  
The Form Immaculate.

It is a form immutable, absolute,  
The voice of a lute,  
The heart of crystal, ivy when it wreathes  
And jasmine when it breathes:  
Star to the pilgrim, lightning-shaft to the foe,  
It is a Form I know  
And seek, although for aeons I await  
The Form Immaculate.

V. K. GOKAK

# *Students' Section*

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## THE MOTHER'S TALKS

*(To the Children of the Ashram)*

### THE ASHRAM: THE OLD PHASE AND THE NEW

Q. We know that we often fall below your expectations. Would you then say that we people are not the right kind?

A. Well, from the occult point of view, you do form a special selection. Most of the young ones here have come because they were promised that they would be present at the moment of the Realisation. Only, they don't remember it. I have often told you that when one descends to be born upon earth, one falls on one's head, as it were, and this dazes one. It's a pity. But still you can get out of that stupefaction. What is necessary is to go within yourselves and find the immortal consciousness in the depths. Then you will see very well, you will remember quite clearly the circumstances in which there was an aspiration to be here at the time the great Work would be accomplished. But, at bottom, to tell you the truth, I believe that you have a too easy life, so easy that you don't trouble to take much pains.

Q. Formerly the Ashram life was very strict, wasn't it? Now it isn't so. Why?

A: I have always said: "Conditions have changed ever since we were obliged to admit the little ones." Surely you cannot think of a strict life for children no higher than one's knees! This impossibility is a gift of the war. When it was found that Pondicherry was the safest spot on earth, people came with a troop of babies and asked if they could be given shelter. How could I turn them back? Naturally I took them in. That is the way the change happened.

In the early days of the Ashram the first condition for staying was that nobody should have anything to do with his family. If a man was married,



he had completely to ignore, from the moment he stepped in, the fact that he had a wife and children. He had to cut off all connection with them. And if ever a wife asked to come because her husband was in the Ashram the answer was: "You have no place here."

But we have travelled some distance from all that. Not that the old conditions were unnecessary: they are indeed very necessary. So long as you keep all the ties which bind you to life, which make you slaves of the ordinary life, how can you belong solely to the Divine? To think that you can is sheer childishness, a pure impossibility! If you took the trouble to read the original rules of the Ashram, you would find that even friendship among people was considered dangerous and hardly desirable. There was an attempt to create an atmosphere in which only thing counted—and that was the Life Divine! But, as I have said, little by little things changed in certain respects.

This has one advantage. People used to be too much outside life. There were plenty of problems which never got posed and which, as soon as one wanted to manifest oneself fully, would suddenly crop up. Perhaps the problems have been taken up too soon. But it was necessary to solve them. There are many things that one learns in this way, many difficulties that one overcomes. But extra complications arise because of various circumstances present. And perhaps, with such a large number of elements who have not the slightest idea why they are here, much greater efforts by the disciples are called for than before.

In the old days we started with about thirty-five or thirty-six disciples and I used to manage them in a certain special way, a way which continued even when there were a hundred and fifty or so. They were held as if within the shell of an egg by my consciousness, they were so close-contained in my consciousness that I could guide all their inner and outer movements all the time: everything was under complete control each moment of the day and night. Naturally, I should say, they made a lot of progress at that time. And it was really a fact that all the time I was doing their sadhana for them! But now, with this invasion, what is one to do? Surely one can't do sadhana for a tot of three years or four years or five years. It's out of the question. All that I can do is to put the true consciousness upon them and try to see that they grow up under the best conditions possible. All this has an advantage. It is that instead of being so totally and so passively dependent each one has to make his own little effort. And this is indeed excellent.

Q: What should we do in order to become plastic to your touch?

A: When there is great good-will in you, when you know that really you

## THE MOTHER'S TALKS

know nothing, that you have everything to learn, that you are powerless to do anything and that to be able to do anything you have again a lot to learn, then you just begin to become a little plastic. When there is a force that puts its pressure, then you open your door to it: this is plasticity.

Q: Does not the ascetic discipline help us to surmount our ordinary attachments and open ourselves to the Divine?

A: No. It merely swells and strengthens your pride.

Q: But haven't you often said: "Renounce pleasure"?

A: Yes, you have to renounce pleasure—but it is not by ascetic discipline that you can renounce pleasure. Pleasure is renounced by an inner illumination and by a sort of sublimation of the being which makes you feel all the grossness and obscurity and disagreeableness of pleasure.

Q. But would not some outer discipline help?

A. If you give yourself a discipline that is not too stupid, it can help you. But let me drive it home to you that the disciplines, the tapasyas, the ascetic practices as they are ordinarily undergone are in fact the best way of creating a formation of self-pride in you, so formidable a pride that never is the smallest chance left you for conversion into the true consciousness. This pride you have to break for yourself by hammer-strokes.

The first condition for conversion is a sane humility which makes you see that unless you are supported, nourished, helped, enlightened, guided by the Divine you are nothing at all! When you feel this humility and not merely understand it with your head, when you feel it even in your body, then you begin to be wise—but not before.

## WHY I AM HERE\*

I CAME here with my father only with a curiosity to see something new, to see what an Ashram was like and how people lived there. I did not feel any other deeper reason. After coming to the Ashram and being blessed with the *darshan* of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother, the vision of a new world and a new life was opened to me and it was impossible for me to go away from here though I did not know at that time what was compelling me to remain here; afterwards I have realised that it was my inmost soul, my psychic being, which felt this to be my true home. Where else could I go, where else could I live after that, leaving my true home and my divine Mother?

I am here to accomplish Mother's work upon earth. Mother is the incarnate Divine. She has taken this human body, she has borne and is still bearing all the sufferings of the world out of her compassion for her children. She loves us, she pities us, she cries for us, she can give us eternal happiness only if we are sincere in our effort to realise the Divine.

I am here that the Divine's will may be fulfilled in me. I am exclusively His, my body, my mind and my whole being are His. But where is He? How can I find Him out? Once I know Him, I shall become entirely His, I shall be in a world where there is nothing but Ananda, eternal happiness. There men do not cry, do not die, do not quarrel, do not hate each other, they simply love one another. There will be no darkness; a light, a golden soothing light will shine everywhere, in everybody's eyes and in everybody's heart. We shall acquire infinite knowledge, nothing will be unknown to us, the mystery of the world will be solved. There will be no jealousy, no ugliness, only love and beauty and bliss.

I am the possessor of infinite power, but I have to be conscious of it, I have to say that I want nothing but the Divine, think of nothing but of the Divine, do nothing but that which leads me towards the Divine and love nothing but the Divine.

Thus in difficulties and in happiness I will remember the Master, who is always with me. My only task is to give myself completely to the Mother without any question, without any desire, without any shrinking or reserve. Because, indeed, Mother is always looking at me, guiding me at each step.

\* In the competition thrown open in this subject to the students of the Sri Aurobindo Ashram School and University by the *Sahitya Parishad* of the Ashram, this essay was adjudged the best. Its author was given a gold medal by the Mother on February 21.

## WHY I AM HERE

The world outside is full of darkness. People want peace and knowledge, love and light and joy but they are frustrated at every step. No outward circumstances can change the condition of mankind. Unless the nature of man is transformed there cannot be really a better and happier life for man. That transformation will come through spiritual discipline and some have to undergo this discipline. Some people have to come forward to receive the light which will spread in the whole world afterwards. It is by the grace of the divine Mother that we are here.

IRA

## MY BOYHOOD UNDER SRI AUROBINDO

### SEX

SELF: How are we to reject a sexual movement from us?

SRI AUROBINDO: As you reject any other vital movement—by throwing it away or withdrawing yourself from it. (8-6-1933)

SELF: What forces are behind this movement?

SRI AUROBINDO: It is the ordinary movement of the lower Nature-forces. (8-6-1933)

SELF: Some part of the novel I had been reading began to play on my mind while I was working afterwards. This novel as most of its kind had dealt with sex too. Did not my subconscious absorb some thoughts from the book while reading it?

SRI AUROBINDO: Naturally, if you read about these things they enter the mind and pass into the subconscious where they leave their impression. If the consciousness is not free from the sexual impulse, this impression can rise up from the subconscious and work in the mind. (3-11-1933)

SELF: But, even without reading novels, I get sexual impulses!

SRI AUROBINDO: Of course. I never said that reading novels was the only thing that brings in sexual thoughts or impulses. (8-11-1933)

SELF: Which is the centre (chakra) from which these sexual thoughts and impulses come?

SRI AUROBINDO: The lowest centre at the bottom of the spine. It contains many other things but also it is in its front the support of the sexual movements.

SELF: What is one to do when the sexual sensations come?

MY BOYHOOD UNDER SRI AUROBINDO

SRI AUROBINDO: Turn away your attention and think of something else.

SELF: At times it happens that the mind is concentrated upon some work. The adverse forces taking advantage of this bring in the attack directly on the body (as it happened yesterday).

SRI AUROBINDO: You have only to turn them out as soon as you feel them. It was simply a passing suggestion from the lower Nature and that ought to be easy to deal with. (9-II-1933)

SELF: Where is the root of the sexual impulses?

SRI AUROBINDO: In matter and vital.

SELF: Are the sexual sensations in the physical consciousness just like inertia?

SRI AUROBINDO: How "just like"? They are not inertia, but they come more easily when there is tamas. (9-II-1933)

SELF: What I meant yesterday by my question about sex, inertia and the physical was this: has sex become as much a principle of the physical as inertia?

SRI AUROBINDO: The sexual sensations do not "become" a principle of the physical consciousness—they are there in the physical nature already—wherever there is conscious life, the sex force is there. It is physical Nature's means of reproduction and it is there for that purpose. (10-II-1933)

SELF: So long as sex presents itself before me as thoughts I can turn it out as you suggested the other day. But the difficulty is about its sensations and impulses.

SRI AUROBINDO: The will ought to have the same mastery over impulses as over the thoughts. Many people find it easier to control an impulse than to prevent a thought. (11-II-1933)

SELF: With what is the sexual impulse to be replaced?

SRI AUROBINDO: The Divine Ananda in the vital and in the body. (12-II-1933)

MOTHER INDIA

SELF: Of what divine part is it a degradation?

SRI AUROBINDO: Ananda—which is the source of the Divine Creation.

SELF: Generally does a bachelor get less sexual sensations than a married man?

SRI AUROBINDO: It depends upon the man—if he has strong sexual desires, he may get more. (14-11-1933)

SELF: If one is in the Ashram from his childhood, does one get over sex without his bothering about it?

SRI AUROBINDO: The staying in the Ashram is not enough.

SELF: Sometimes it is noticed that the mere presence of a woman is enough to raise the sexual sensations in us: How does it happen like that?

SRI AUROBINDO: It is quite usual—just as the smell of very nice food may awake the desire of the food.

SELF: While reading a famous man's biography I found that a sexual sensation came into myself. How did this happen?

SRI AUROBINDO: It comes in because it has been the habit of the vital to admit such movements. (19-12-1933)

SELF: In what way does the vital being partake in matters of sex?

SRI AUROBINDO: By desire, joy, personal attraction, passion and in many other ways. (17-11-1933)

SELF: While looking at the pictures of women, sometimes I get sexual sensations. Do you want me to avoid looking or to overcome its influence?

SRI AUROBINDO: You had better get rid of the influence. It won't do not to be able to look at a woman or a picture of a woman without getting sexual sensations—you must get rid of that. (4-12-1933)

SELF: Today I had neither sexual sensations nor thoughts while in the presence of ladies; and yet there was something in the mind which I failed to understand.

## MY BOYHOOD UNDER SRI AUROBINDO

SRI AUROBINDO: Probably some pressure or presence of the sex force indeterminate and without form. (22-12-1933)

SELF: While listening to music this morning I felt as if stones were falling on me in the form of sexual sensations. A very strange experience!

SRI AUROBINDO: When the mind and the higher vital reject, they take this form which belongs to the vital-physical. (25-12-1933)

SELF: Am I more open than others to the universal forces so as to receive any bad influence from anywhere?

SRI AUROBINDO: You have the same suggestions and invasions of these forces as others have.

SELF: I am trying to reject them, but with no effect.

SRI AUROBINDO: If you want to reject, you have to reject patiently and persistently—these forces are not going to give up so early.

SELF: Up to what stage do the sexual forces follow us?

SRI AUROBINDO: There is no rule about that. Some get rid of them early—others keep till the physical and subconscious are taken up by the Force altogether.

## EGO

SELF: I find it difficult to keep myself free from feeling disgust for X whenever I see him. When I meet him all the wrong actions he has done come up before my memory. How am I to throw away such stupid reactions from my nature?

SRI AUROBINDO: By having dislike and disgust for nobody—remembering that the Divine is in all. (24-6-1933)

SELF (in continuation of the above question): I do not understand how I manage to forget that once I too had done the wrong things even more freely than he!

SRI AUROBINDO: It is the vital ego that does like that.



SELF: Sitting in the Asram I was writing with a fountain pen. I saw the force of vanity entering me. It made me feel that to use a pen here is something extraordinary! I tried in vain to keep it at bay. This feeling possessed me completely when I was seen writing by Y.

Please enlighten me: why could I not succeed in preventing this vanity in spite of my foreknowledge of its coming?

SRI AUROBINDO: Your mind was rejecting it, but something in you was calling it, so it came in. Either something in your vital wanted people to see or something in your physical consciousness was too much accustomed to receive such things to be able to shut its doors against it. (30-6-1933)

SELF: My mind watched some of the vices that come to me as well as to others. It then concluded that many of us are ignorant of our ego, and that the ego is the commonest thing in the world. What sort of perception is this?

SRI AUROBINDO: It is the same kind of perception as the other. Ego is not only common in man, it is universal. (2-8-1933)

SELF: What is the place of individuality in our Yoga?

SRI AUROBINDO: There is a spiritual individuality in each person which develops with the development of the consciousness in sadhana. (19-8-1933)

SELF: But what happens in the course of the sadhana to the other—non-spiritual—individuality which is already there in us?

SRI AUROBINDO: What individuality? If you mean the ego it has to disappear and be replaced by the true individual. (20-11-1933)

SELF: Once, when asked about the present human personality, you said, "It is to be a portion and instrument of the Divine." Is it not already a derivation from the Divine?

SRI AUROBINDO: The present personality is the ego—it is an instrument of the ignorant Prakriti. (25-8-1933)

SELF: Is it not so because of our unconsciousness? If we were conscious surely we would have found that the source of our capacity lay in the Divine, and that we were mistaken in appropriating it.

MY BOYHOOD UNDER SRI AUROBINDO

SRI AUROBINDO: Obviously. It is Nature, Prakriti, that expresses itself in the capacity—the ego is only an instrument of her workings. (26-8-1933)

SELF: If the Purusha separates itself from the Prakriti, will the ego disappear by itself?

SRI AUROBINDO: Not at once, but it is the first step for the disappearance of the ego. (1-9-1933)

SELF: After taking something from the universal consciousness one returns to his individual being. Can that something now be called one's own?

SRI AUROBINDO: You can consider anything you like as your own, if you look at it from the egoistic point of view. (20-9-1933)

SELF: It is of course from Nature that the artist receives his faculty. But afterwards it is he who develops it and tends it. What has Nature got to do with it then?

SRI AUROBINDO: You must just as well talk of the electricity in a dynamo belonging to the dynamo and not to Nature. All is Force of Nature. You cannot breathe or think or move without Nature breathing or thinking or moving in you. (20-9-1933)

NAGIN DOSHI

## HIROBUMI ITO

### SRI AUROBINDO

*(Translated by Prithwindra from the original Bengali article written in 1909 and later included in "Jagannather Rath.")*

Two types of beings are born among men. Those that reveal their inner Divinity as they progress in the course of evolution are ordinary men. Those that are born as Vibhuti in order to help this evolution are different. Adapting themselves to the character and customs of the nation and the Dharma (law of the age they are born in), they work out by the help of their divine power and nature things which would prove to be impossible for man; they only reform a little the process of Nature and return to the sphere they came from, leaving just an imperishable name in the history of the people. Their actions are beyond all human praise or blame and, however we may praise or blame them, they fulfil their God-given duty, and the fate of humanity moves rapidly in the direct on determined by their work. Caesar, Napoleon, Akbar, Shivaji—all belonged to this type of Vibhuti. The great soul of Japan, Hirobumi Ito, belonged to this category too, and none of those above mentioned was greater than Ito, be it in capacity, genius or loftiness of work, or in the result of the work. Everyone is acquainted with the importance of Ito in the history and in the resurgence of Japan, but everybody may not know that Ito alone conceived the line, the process and the goal of that resurgence, and brought about this reform; the other great men of Japan were merely his instruments. Ito alone had in his mind the scheme of the unity, the liberty, the power—intellectual, military, naval and economic—and of the commerce and the politics of Japan, and put it into practice. He alone prepared the future Japanese Empire. Mostly he kept himself behind all that he did. The world immediately knows of what Kaiser Wilhelm of Germany or Lloyd George of England is doing or thinking. No one knew what Ito was thinking or doing, but when his secret plan and attempt became successful, the surprised world then understood what was being done. Yet how great was the work! What rare genius expressed itself through the work! If Ito had been in the habit of conceiving plans only, at every step the world would have mocked at him as at a mad aspirant of what is impossible, or as an idealist indulging in Utopias. But who would believe that keeping

## HIROBUMI ITO

her freedom intact, Japan could take hold of the whole of Western Civilisation within the short period of fifty years, could become an equally strong and mighty nation as England, Germany or France, could defeat China, defeat Russia, could spread her commerce and art, earn praise for her intellect and evoke fear for her valour, could conquer Korea, conquer Formosa, could establish the foundation of such a huge Empire, could lift up her standard of unity, liberty, equality and national education so high? Napoleon used to say that the word impossible did not exist in his dictionary. Ito never said such a thing but he gave it reality through his actions. Ito's work is greater than that of Napoleon. So great a man has been shot dead, but there is little to lament about. He who had dedicated his life to Japan, whose only thought was Japan, whose only deity was Japan has sacrificed his life for the sake of Japan,—it is happy news, rather, fortunate news, news to be proud of. "*Hato va prapsyasi swargam, jitva va bhokshyase mahim*" (If thou perishest, thou obtainest Heaven; if thou winnest, thou enjoyest the earth). But both of these rare fruits have been obtained by Hirobumi Ito from a single life-tree.

## HUMAN PERSONALITY

(Based on Sri Aurobindo's Writings)

WHAT is human personality?

To this question psychology seeks an answer. Man does in fact know a little about himself, but he has not yet learnt it fully, and much of his conduct is determined by motives of which he himself is not aware. What we ordinarily know of as man is just a bundle of sensations and vital desires with a few ruling ideas. As Sri Aurobindo says, "To the ordinary man who lives upon his own waking surface, ignorant of the self's depths and vastness behind the veil, his psychological existence is fairly simple. A small but clamorous company of desires, some imperative intellectual and aesthetic cravings, some tastes, a few ruling or prominent ideas amid a great current of unconnected or ill-connected and mostly trivial thoughts, a number of more or less imperative vital needs, alternations of physical health and disease, a scattered and inconsequent succession of joys and griefs, frequent minor disturbances and vicissitudes and rarer strong searchings and upheavals of mind or body, and through it all Nature, partly with the aid of his thought and will, partly without or in spite of it, arranging these things in some rough practical fashion, some tolerable disorderly order,—this is the material of his existence." His movements are limited. He is full of errors and obstacles. He is limited in his experiences. He is full of confusion, a mixture of emotions and passions and desires. He is limited, based on division, dispersed in knowledge, divided between dual experiences. He is obscure and rigid in his nature. He is aware of a small part of himself: his surface mentality, his surface life, his surface physical being are all that he knows—even what he knows is incomplete. As Sri Aurobindo says, "our momentary personality is only a bubble on the ocean of our existence."

But man, the offspring of *Manu*, the Divine Thinker, is not a mere mind in living matter, but a spirit, a soul encased in mind, with a life and body. There are three sheaths of consciousness in us: the material, *annakosha*, in which the physical contacts and images are received and formed,—the vital or nervous, *prānakosha*, in which there is a nervous contact and formation,—the mental, *manahkosha*, in which there is mental contact and imaging.

On each level of our consciousness, existence is composed of Purusha and Prakriti, "the consciousness that sees and the consciousness that executes

and formalises what we see....When we come to look in at ourselves instead of out at the world and begin to analyse our subjective experience, we find that there are two parts of our being which can be, to all appearance, entirely separated from each other, one a consciousness which is still and passive and supports, and the other a consciousness which is busy and creative, and is supported. The passive and fundamental consciousness" is the Purusha, Witness or *sākshu*, "the active and superstructural consciousness" is Prakriti, Nature, "processive or creative energy of the *sākshu*. But the Purusha in us forgets himself and gets identified with Prakriti and becomes one, as I were, with the three qualitative modes or gunas, sattwa, rajas and tamas, of which Prakriti is composed. Sattwa is the quality of light and harmony and happiness; rajas, the quality of impulsion and action; and tamas, the quality of inertia, indolence and general obscurity. These three gunas are interwoven in everything that exists in the world. There is nothing in which there is not an interlocked action of these qualities. And this interaction is not an equal, but unequal, shifting interaction, which at once determines and suggests the trend of the evolutionary progression of each being.

What we usually call ourselves is a composite of elements belonging to material Prakriti and constituting the physical body in which life and mind are active. This physical body is a portion and product of the physical universe. Similarly our life in the body belongs to the world of life, the same is true of our mind, as that is but a portion of the universal Mind. What separates our body, life and mind from the universal Matter, universal Life and universal Mind is the principle called Ego, *Ahankāra*. In the mental plane *Ahankāra* becomes Sattwic and binds by knowledge, virtue and self-righteousness; always attaching itself to some imperfect realisation, to the idea of one's own virtue. In the vital plane it becomes Rajasic and binds by desire and cravings, it is always reaching after action and the fruit of action. In the physical plane it becomes Tamasic and binds by weakness and a lapse into ease and inaction; always sinking into idleness, depression, fear and disappointment. Sri Aurobindo says, "On the surface, in the half-conscious state, it is our mental, vital, physical Prakriti that acts and the Purusha is disfigured, as it were, in the action of Prakriti. It is not our true mental being, our true vital being, our true physical being. It is the mental, vital, physical ego that we take for our being until we get knowledge." .."Ego is the product of life-discord and disharmony that we call wrong and evil. Ego is the lynch-pin invented to hold together the motion of our wheel of nature. It is nothing fundamentally real in itself. It is only a face of the universal being and has no separate existence; our apparent separative individuality is only a surface movement."

Ego is a temporary device, a phenomenal construction of Nature for constituting mentally conscious and separate individualities in the Ignorance. In the

midst of the amorphous flux of universal elements, the shifting intermixture of forces and energies, something was needed to serve as a centralising and co-ordinating agency, otherwise no individualities could have been formed. The soul, the true individual, the essential inmost entity which in the mental, vital and physical planes is figured in the inner part of the being called Purusha, could certainly not come forward at the very start and be the overt pilot of its evolution in Nature; the start from the Inconscience precluded such an abrupt intervention. Evolution, commencing from the Inconscient, has perforce to pass through the transitional stage of Ignorance, in which ego-centric division and discord inevitably predominate, before it culminates in the Knowledge and unity of the Superconscient. In man the soul has succeeded in making the ego his conscious representative, endowing it with reason, imagination, conscious volition, developed and articulate emotions, even tentative flashes of intuition. But the human ego is a chained and convulsed representative of the soul,—chained to the dualities and convulsed by desires and passions—and has no perception of the Will of God, which the soul is commissioned here to fulfil. Besides, it lives in limitations, and reasons and reflects and acts in the semi-darkness of a mental consciousness. And, though it strains after the unknown and immense, it proceeds on the basis of division, serves its own aggrandisement and can only imperfectly imagine and conceive, but never realise and live, the unity and harmony of existence.

This is what we call our waking and surface consciousness, but it is not really our true being. The Earth-Being has within it involved all the higher powers of the Divine Being, the graded principles of consciousness through which Creation has proceeded downwards from the original creative Power. Behind our superficial waking self there is a vast subliminal kingdom of inner consciousness. It is deeper, greater, vaster than our surface egoistic personality. There is an inner mind, inner vital, inner physical with the psychic behind them, far larger and subtler than our outer mind, vital and physical.

Our inmost being is the psychic veiled by the surface nature. It is made of love and bliss and is the very self of an immaculate purity. It is the one thing in us that is imperishable. It has a direct, spontaneous perception of truth and beauty and goodness, and an infallible sense of the unity and harmony of things. "It is the very nature of the soul or the psychic being to turn towards the Divine Truth as the sunflower to the sun; it accepts and clings to all that is divine or progressing towards divinity and draws back from all that is a perversion or a denial of it, from all that is false and undivine. .. This veiled psychic entity is the flame of the Godhead always alight within us, inextinguishable even by that dense unconsciousness of any spiritual self within which obscures our outward nature. It is a flame born out of the Divine and, luminous inhabitant of the

Ignorance, grows in it till it is able to turn it towards the Knowledge. It is the concealed Witness and Control, the hidden Guide, the Daemon of Socrates, the inner light or inner voice of the mystic....” “It is...untouched by death, decay or corruption....It is...the true original Conscience in us deeper than the constructed and conventional conscience of the moralist, for it is this which points always towards Truth and Right and Beauty, towards Love and Harmony and all that is a divine possibility in us, and persists till these things become the major need of our nature.” The psychic is covered up by the ignorant mind, vital and physical and compelled to act through them according to the law of the Ignorance. It also supports mind, life and body. It grows and develops by experiences from life to life, from one birth to another birth and, finally, it turns the mind, vital and body towards the knowledge of the Self and Divine.

The seat of the psychic in us is behind the heart. It is the individual spark-soul supporting the evolution of our nature in the material world. It is the child of the divine Mother descended into the evolutionary experience, and immediately aware of Her Will in itself. The psychic being is the temple of the Divine in us and it is because of it that even the vilest man, the most confirmed sinner sometimes feels a qualm and is contrite, and lifts up his eyes to Heaven for a ray of light, a redeeming touch of Grace. “It is always this psychic being that is the real, though often the secret, cause of man’s turning to the spiritual life and his greatest help.” “Its character is a one-pointed orientation towards the Divine or the Highest, one-pointed and yet plastic in action and movement; it does not create a rigidity of direction like the one-pointed intellect or a bigotry of the regnant idea or impulse like the one-pointed vital force; it is at every moment and with a supple sureness that it points the way to the Truth, automatically distinguishes the right step from the false, extricates the divine or God-ward movement from the clinging mixture of the undivine. Its action is like a search-light showing up all that has to be changed in the nature; it has in it a flame of will insistent on perfection, on an alchemic transmutation of all the inner and outer existence. It sees the divine essence everywhere but rejects the mere mask and the disguising figure. It insists on Truth, on will and strength and mastery, on Joy and Love and Beauty, but on a Truth of abiding Knowledge that surpasses the mere practical momentary truth of the Ignorance, on an inward joy and not on mere vital pleasure,—for it prefers rather a purifying suffering and sorrow to degrading satisfaction....Its will is for the divinisation of life, the expression through it of a higher Truth, its dedication to the Divine and the Eternal.

“But the most intimate character of the psychic is its pressure towards the Divine through a sacred love, joy and oneness. It is the divine Love that it seeks most, it is the love of the Divine that is its spur, its goal, its star of Truth shining



over the luminous cave of the nascent or the still obscure cradle of the new-born godhead within us.”

We are aware of our body and know that we have a physical existence. We are partly aware of its operation. There is the Subconscious and the Inconscious below our conscious physical activities. Let us deal first with the Inconscious and then the Subconscious. The Inconscious is the origin of the evolutionary creation. It is an infinite abyss of absolute darkness. This darkness of the Inconscious turns the eternal effulgent substance of Reality into Matter, the dense and obscure primal substrate. In this fathomless night of existence or apparent non-existence, there is no stirring of life or mind, only a blind mighty Energy weaves stupendous systems of worlds and suns and moons and star-clusters and planets, as if in a dumb creative sleep. Out of this tranced involution of the Spirit in Matter evolves life. During the course of evolution, last emerges man out of the animal, with a far more evolved set of organs and faculties, a more extended and sensitive gamut of psychological functioning and a more conscious mind equipped with a developed reason and a self-directing will. But however free and self-directing man's will may be, however wide and limpid his waking consciousness, the roots of his life and nature lie still embedded in the swamps of the Inconscious. His conservatism, his unwillingness and inability to change, his forgetfulness of his divine origin and essence, his easy subjection to doubts and dull fatigue, to disease and death are all a trailing heritage from inconscient Matter.

The Subconscious is above the Inconscious and just below our surface physical consciousness, below the threshold, as it is called. It is, to quote Sri Aurobindo, “the extreme border of our inner existence where it meets the Inconscious; it is a degree of our being in which the Inconscious struggles into a half-consciousness; the surface physical consciousness also, when it sinks back from the working level and retrogresses towards the Inconscious, retires into the intermediate Subconscience. Or, from another view-point, this nether part of us may be described as the antechamber of the Inconscious through which its formations rise into our waking or our subliminal being. When we sleep and the surface physical part of us which is in its first origin here an output from the Inconscious, relapses towards the originating inconscience, it enters into this subconscious element, antechamber or substratum, and there it finds the impressions of its past or persistent habits of mind and experiences,—for all have left their mark on our subconscious part and have there a power of recurrence. In its effect on our waking self this recurrence often takes the form of a reassertion of old habits, impulses dormant or suppressed, rejected elements of the nature, or it comes up as some other not so easily recognisable, some peculiar disguised or subtle result of these suppressed or rejected but not erased impulses or elements.” We call it the Subconscious because it is below the level of mind and conscious

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life, inferior and obscure, covers the purely physical and vital elements which cannot be observed or controlled by the mind. But it has also got the capacity to attend, to receive and treasure up without any mistake, even though the surface mind may not pay any attention.

The Subconscient is the main support of all habitual movements, especially the physical and lower vital movements. The action of the Subconscient is irrational, mechanical, repetitive. It does not listen to reason or the mental will. It is only by bringing the higher Light and Force into it that it can change.

*(To be continued)*

VISHU