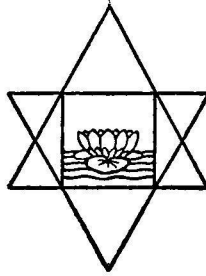


MOTHER INDIA

JUNE, 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

Vol. VII

No. 5

"Great is Truth and it shall prevail"

CONTENTS

	<i>Page</i>
SRI AUROBINDO'S LETTERS	... I
SELECTED HYMNS FROM THE RIGVEDA—AND COMMENTARY	... <i>Sri Aurobindo</i> ... 6
SANSKRIT RESEARCH	... <i>Sri Aurobindo</i> ... 13
FOR THE NEW-COMER (Unpublished Letters)	... <i>Sri Aurobindo</i> ... 21
THE SOUL OF A PLANT	... <i>Sri Aurobindo</i> ... 22
INNER SIGHT AND INNER HEARING (Unpublished Letters)	... <i>Sri Aurobindo</i> ... 28
EINSTEIN'S FOUR-DIMENSIONAL CONTINUUM	... <i>K. D. Sethna</i> ... 29
POEMS:	
THE MOTHER'S NAME	... <i>Prithwi Singh</i> ... 34
FLIGHT	... <i>Robi Gupta</i> ... 35
DISCOVERY	... <i>Har Krishan Singh</i> ... 36
INCONSISTENCIES IN SPIRITUAL LIFE	... <i>Jibendra</i> ... 37
BOOKS IN THE BALANCE	
THE INTEGRAL YOGA OF SRI AUROBINDO (By Rishabhchand)	... <i>R. N. Khanna</i> ... 40
SRI AUROBINDO CIRCLE ELEVENTH NUMBER	... <i>R. N. Khanna</i> ... 43
Students' Section	
THE MOTHER'S TALKS	... 45
MY BOYHOOD UNDER SRI AUROBINDO	... <i>Nagin Doshi</i> ... 49
POEMS:	
HIS EYES OF DIAMOND PEACE	... <i>Chinmoy</i> ... 53
A DREAM	... <i>Ranajit</i> ... 54
A CHILD'S PRAYER	... <i>Prithwindra</i> ... 55
NEW ROADS: BOOK IV—THE TRAVELLER	... <i>Norman Dowsett</i> ... 56

SRI AUROBINDO'S LETTERS

MEDITATION AND SLEEP

SADHAK: Is there any difference between doing meditation in a sitting position and doing it whilst walking? I feel that whilst walking, it is not possible to get the same amount of concentration as in the other—for beginners, at least.

SRI AUROBINDO: It is as each finds convenient. Some meditate better walking, some sitting.

SADHAK: I suppose, meditation whilst walking is more likely to be a prayer than meditation proper.

SRI AUROBINDO: Not at all. One can meditate very well when walking.

SADHAK: As soon as I start meditating I lapse into sleep.

SRI AUROBINDO: The sleep does come like that when one tries to meditate. It has to be dealt with, where that is possible, by turning it into a conscious inner and indrawn state and, where not, by remaining in a quietly concentrated wakefulness open (without effort) to receive.

*

*

SADHAK: I have read in *Mother's Conversations* that if one prays to Her before going to bed to be conscious in sleep, it helps.

SRI AUROBINDO: You have to start by concentrating before you sleep always with a specific will or aspiration. The will or aspiration may take time to reach the subconscious, but if it is sincere, strong and steady, it does reach after a time—so that an automatic consciousness and will are established in the sleep itself which will do what is necessary.

SADHAK: When I get up in the morning I find that the previous day's sadhana is forgotten. What should be done to keep up the continuity?

SRI AUROBINDO: The gap made by the night and waking with the ordinary consciousness is the case with everybody almost (of course, the "ordinary"

MOTHER INDIA

consciousness differs according to the progress); but it is no use wanting to be conscious in sleep; you have to get the habit of getting back the thread of the progress as soon as may be and for that there must be some concentration after rising.

You need not meditate at once—but for a few moments take a concentrated attitude calling the Mother's presence for the day.

At night, you have to pass into sleep in the concentration—you must be able to concentrate with the eyes closed, lying down and the concentration must deepen into sleep—that is to say, sleep must become a concentrated going inside away from the outer waking state. If you find it necessary to sit for a time you may do so, but afterwards lie down keeping the concentration till this happens.

SADHAK: But I find that the concentration before going to bed unconsciously merges into sleep.

SRI AUROBINDO: These things cannot have their effect in a moment. You must persevere till the physical consciousness is penetrated.

*

*

THE INNER BEING AND THE SURFACE CONSCIOUSNESS

SADHAK: During the evening meditation I was wondering why I was not able to find the rasa of this life. Many have found it in poetry, some in painting, others in physical work. I was thinking of praying to you to give me some joy and interest in the world when I had an experience: I felt that my mind was divided into two parts—the inner being was silent, not disturbed by anything, while the surface mind was thinking at random. As soon as the outer thoughts cropped up it tried to see if all this was a forced condition of mind,—but no, the silence was really there and intact. This continued as long as the meditation lasted. I would like to have your corroboration on the matter. I wonder how these experiences suddenly drop in.

SRI AUROBINDO: The consciousness from which these experiences come is always there pressing to bring them in. The reason why they don't come in freely or stay is the activity of the mind and vital always rushing about thinking this, wanting that, trying to perform mountaineering feats on all the hillocks of the lower nature instead of nourishing a strong and simple aspiration and opening to the higher consciousness that it may come in and do its own work. Rasa of poetry, painting or physical work is not the thing to go after. What

gives the interest in Yoga is the rasa of the Divine and of the divine consciousness which means the rasa of Peace, of Silence, of inner Light and Bliss, of growing inner Knowledge, of increasing inner Power, of the Divine Love, of all the infinite fields of experience that open to one with the opening of the inner consciousness. The true rasa of poetry, painting or any other activity is only found when these things are part of the working of the Divine Force in you, and you feel it is that and it exists in the joy of that working.

This condition you had of the inner being and its silence separated from the surface consciousness and its little restless workings is the first liberation, the liberation of Purusha from Prakriti, and it is a fundamental experience. The day when you can keep it, you can know that the Yogic consciousness has been founded in you. This time it has increased in intensity, but it must also increase in duration.

These things do not "drop"—what you have felt was there in you all the time, but you did not feel it because you were living on the surface altogether, and the surface is all crowd and clamour. But in all men there is this silent Purusha, base of the true mental being, the true vital being, the true physical being. It was by your prayer and aspiration that the thing came, to show you in what direction you must travel in order to have the true rasa of things, for it is only when one is liberated that one can get the real rasa. For after this liberation come others and among them the liberation and Ananda in action as well as in the static inner silence.

SADHAK: I would like to know if experiences of this kind effect a lasting result in the consciousness.—Do they ever settle down and become a constant realisation, or do they just occur off and on?

SRI AUROBINDO: They come first in this isolated way, afterwards more frequently and for longer periods, then they settle. In some they settle at once, but that is rare. In some they persist recurring till they are settled, that is less rare. In others the occurrence is at first at long intervals and waits for the consciousness to be ready.

SADHAK: It seems I had the same experience again. In the meditation I felt that something descended, and the body became silent; it seemed to me that it was something apart from me. Along with this the inner silence began. I tried to test and verify it by thinking of external things, which however could not disturb the silence.

SRI AUROBINDO: The real self (Atman or Purusha) is not the body—the

MOTHER INDIA

body is something separate, a part of the being, but a part of Prakriti, not the true self or Purusha.

It is best to remain silent. To test the experience may lead to a mental activity which will break it. That it did not [do] so in this case, shows that the power of silence that came down must have been very strong and imperative.

SADHAK: You said before that this condition was of the inner being and its silence, the separation of Purusha from Prakriti.

SRI AUROBINDO: Yes, but it seems also to be the beginning of liberation from identification with the body consciousness. That easily comes with the Purusha consciousness in the inner being.

SADHAK: Is this inner being the same as the psychic being?

SRI AUROBINDO: No, not necessarily—the inner being is composed of the inner mental, the inner vital, the inner physical. The psychic is the inmost supporting all the others. Usually it is in the inner mental that this separation first happens and it is the inner mental Purusha who remains silent, observing the Prakriti as separate from himself. But it may also be the inner vital Purusha or inner physical or else without location simply the whole Purusha consciousness separate from the whole Prakriti. Sometimes it is felt above the head, but then it is usually spoken of as the Atman and the realisation is that of the silent Self.

DURGA

SADHAK: X told us today that the Mother was trying to bring down the personality of Durga on the Puja day.

SRI AUROBINDO: There was no trying—it came down.

SADHAK: When I came for pranam, the Mother's appearance made me feel that she was Durga herself. I don't know whether such a feeling arose out of the association with the puja on that day, or quite independently of it.

SRI AUROBINDO: All that is the silliness of the physical mind which thinks itself very clever in explaining away the inner feeling or perception.

SADHAK: These feelings are so vague and momentary, and not accompanied by a concrete vision.

SRI AUROBINDO'S LETTERS

SRI AUROBINDO: What else do you expect the first touches to be!

SADHAK: To give you one instance: I heard as if the Goddess Bhagawati were telling me, "I am coming" and many other things which I don't remember now.

SRI AUROBINDO: These things are at least a proof that the inner mind and vital are trying to open to supraphysical things. But if you belittle it at once the moment it starts how can it ever develop!

SADHAK: I have started concentrating in the heart now. Last Sunday while I was meditating I had the vision of your face floating before me for about an hour or so, accompanied by a deep joy. I was fully conscious, but the body became utterly numb. Has anything in me opened up? Is all this the fulfilment of the promise given by Bhagwati?

SRI AUROBINDO: It looks like it. At any rate there is evidently an opening in the heart-centre or you would not have had the change or the vision with the stilling of the physical consciousness in the body.

SELECTED HYMNS

SRI AUROBINDO

THE ASHWINS, LORDS OF BLISS

Rigveda IV. 45.

1. Lo, that Light is rising up and the all-pervading car is being yoked on the high level of this Heaven; there are placed satisfying delights in their triple pairs and the fourth skin of honey overflows.

2. Full of honey upward rise the delights; upward horses and cars in the wide shinings of the Dawn and they roll aside the veil of darkness that encompassed on every side and they extend the lower world into a shining form like that of the luminous heaven.

3. Drink of the honey with your honey-drinking mouths, for the honey yoke your car beloved. With the honey you gladden the movements and its paths; full of honey, O Ashwins, is the skin that you bear.

4. Full of the honey are the swans that bear you, golden-winged, waking with the Dawn, and they come not to hurt; they rain forth the waters, they are full of rapture and touch that which holds the Rapture. Like bees to pourings of honey you come to the Soma-offerings.

5. Full of the honey the fires lead well the sacrifice and they woo your brightness, O Ashwins, day by day, when one with purified hands, with a perfect vision, with power to go through to the goal has pressed out with the pressing-stones the honeyed Soma-wine.

6. Drinking the wine near them, the fires ride and run and extend the lower world into a shining form like that of the luminous heaven. The Sun too goes yoking his steeds; by force of Nature's self-arranging you move consciously along all paths.¹

¹ Or, you take knowledge of all the paths in their order.

SELECTED HYMNS

7. I have declared, O Ashwins, holding the Thought in me, your car that is undecaying and drawn by perfect steeds,—your car by which you move at once over all the worlds towards the enjoyment rich in offerings that makes through to the goal.

COMMENTARY

The hymns of the Rigveda addressed to the two shining Twins, like those addressed to the Ribhus, are full of symbolic expressions and unintelligible without a firm clue to their symbolism. The three leading features of these hymns to the Ashwins are the praise of their chariot, their horses and their rapid all-pervading movement; their seeking of honey and their joy in the honey, *madhu*, and the satisfying delights that they carry in their car; and their close association with the Sun, with *Suryā* the daughter of the Sun and with the Dawn.

The Ashwins like the other gods descend from the Truth-consciousness, the Ritam; they are born or manifested from Heaven, from Dyaus, the pure Mind; their movement pervades all the worlds,—the effect of their action ranges from the body through the vital being and the thought to the superconscious Truth. It commences indeed from the ocean, from the vague of the being as it emerges out of the subconscious and they conduct the soul over the flood of these waters and prevent its foundering on its voyage. They are therefore *Nāsatyā*, lords of the movement, leaders of the journey or voyage.

They help man with the Truth which comes to them especially by association with the Dawn, with Surya, lord of the Truth, and with *Suryā*, his daughter, but they help him more characteristically with the delight of being. They are lords of bliss, *śubhaṣpati*; their car or movement is loaded with the satisfactions of the delight of being in all its planes; they bear the skin full of the overflowing honey; they seek the honey, the sweetness, and fill all things with it. They are therefore effective powers of the Ananda which proceeds out of the Truth-consciousness and which manifesting itself variously in all the three worlds maintains man in his journey. Hence their action is in all the worlds. They are especially riders or drivers of the Horse, Ashwins, as their name indicates, they use the vitality of the human being as the motive-force of the journey: but also they work in the thought and lead it to the Truth. They give health, beauty, wholeness to the body; they are the divine physicians. Of all the gods they are the most ready to come to man and to create for him ease and joy, *āgamīsthā*, *śubhaṣpati*. For this is their peculiar and perfect function. They are essentially lords of weal, of bliss, *śubhaṣpati*.

This character of the Ashwins is brought out with a continual emphasis by Vamadeva in the present hymn. In almost every verse occurs with a constant

iteration the words *madhu*, *madhumān*, honey, honied. It is a hymn to the sweetness of existence; it is a chant of the delight of being.

The great Light of lights, the Sun of Truth, the illumination of the Truth-consciousness is rising up out of the movement of life to create the illumined Mind, Swar which completes the evolution of the lower triple world. *Eṣa sya bhānur udiyarti*. By this rising of the Sun in man, the full movement of the Ashwins becomes possible; for by the Truth comes the realised Delight, the heavenly beatitude. Therefore, the chariot of the Ashwins is being yoked upon the height of this Dyaus, the high level or plane of the resplendent mind. That chariot is all-pervading; its motion goes everywhere; its speed runs freely on all planes of our consciousness. *Yujyate rathah pariṃmā divo asya sānavi*.

The full all-pervading movement of the Ashwins brings with it the fullness of all the possible satisfactions of the delight of being. This is expressed symbolically in the language of the Veda by saying that in their car are found the satisfactions, *prikṣāsah*, in three pairs, *prikṣāsa asmin mithunā adhu trayah*. The word *prikṣa* is rendered food in the ritual interpretation like the kindred word *prayas*. The root means pleasure, fullness, satisfaction, and may have the material sense of a "delicacy" or satisfying food and the psychological sense of a delight, pleasure or satisfaction. The satisfactions or delicacies which are carried in the car of the Ashwins are, then, in three pairs; or the phrase may simply mean, they are three but closely associated together. In any case, the reference is to the three kinds of satisfaction or pleasure which correspond to the three movements or worlds of our progressive consciousness,—satisfactions of the body, satisfactions of the vitality, satisfactions of the mind. If they are in three pairs, then we must understand that on each plane there is a double action of the delight corresponding to the double and united twinhood of the Ashwins. It is difficult in the Veda itself to distinguish between these brilliant and happy Twins or to discover what each severally represents. We have no such indication as is given us in the case of the three Ribhus. But perhaps the Greek names of these two Dioskouroi, *Divo napātā*, sons of Heaven, contain a clue. Kastor, the name of the elder, seems to be Kashtri, the Shining One; Poludeukes¹ may possibly be Purudansas, a name which occurs in the Veda as an epithet of the Ashwins, the Manifold in activity. Of so, the twin birth of the Ashwins recalls the constant Vedic dualism of Power and Light, Knowledge and Will, Consciousness and Energy, Go and Ashwa. In all the satisfactions brought to us by the Ashwins these two elements are inseparably united; where the form is that of the Light,

¹ The K of Poludeukes points to an original ḡ; the name would then be Purudanḡas; but such fluctuations between the various sibilants were common enough in the early fluid state of the Aryan tongues.

SELECTED HYMNS

or consciousness, there Power and Energy are contained; where the form is that of the Power or Energy, there Light and Consciousness are contained.

But these three forms of satisfaction are not all that their chariot holds for us; there is something else, a fourth, a skin full of honey and out of this skin the honey breaks and overflows on every side. *Dr'itis turīyo madhuno vi rapśate*. Mind, life and body, these are three; *turīya*, the fourth plane of our consciousness, is the superconscient, the Truth-consciousness. The Ashwins bring with them a skin, *dr'iti*, literally a thing cut or torn, a partial formation out of the Truth-consciousness to contain the honey of the superconscient Beatitude; but it cannot contain it; that unconquerably abundant and infinite sweetness breaks out and overflows everywhere drenching with delight the whole of our existence.

With that honey the three pairs of satisfactions, mental, vital, bodily are impregnated by this all-pervasive overflowing plenty and they become full of its sweetness, *madumantah*. And so becoming, at once they begin to move upward. Touched by the divine delight all our satisfactions in this lower world soar upward irresistibly attracted towards the superconscient, towards the Truth, towards the Beatitude. And with them,—for, secretly or openly, consciously or subconsciously it is the delight of being that is the leader of our activities—all the chariots and horses of these gods take the same soaring upward movement. All the various movements of our being, all the forms of Force that givethem their impulsion, all follow the ascending light of Truth towards its home. *Ud vām pṛikṣaso madhumanta irate, rathā aśwāsa uśaso vyuṣṭisu*.

“In the wide-shining of the Dawn” they rise; for Dawn is the illumination of the Truth rising upon the mentality to bring the day of full consciousness into the darkness or half-lit night of our being. She comes as Dakshina, the pure intuitive discernment on which Agni the God-force in us feeds when he aspires towards the Truth or as Sarama, the discovering intuition, who penetrates into the cave of the subconscient where the niggard lords of sense-action have hidden the radiant herds of the Sun and gives information to Indra. Then comes the lord of luminous Mind and breaks open the cave and drives upward the herds, *udājat*, upwards towards the vast Truth-consciousness, the own home of the gods. Our conscious existence is a hill (*adri*) with many successive levels and elevations, *sānūni*; the cave of the subconscient is below; we climb upwards towards the godhead of the Truth and Bliss where are the seats of Immortality, *yatrāmritāsa āsate*.¹

By this upward movement of the chariot of the Ashwins with its burden of uplifted and transformed satisfactions the veil of Night that encompasses the worlds of being in us is rolled away. All these worlds, mind, life, body, are

¹ R. V. IX. 15,

opened to the rays of the Sun of Truth. This lower world in us, *rajas*, is extended and shaped by this ascending movement of all its powers and satisfactions into the very brightness of the luminous intuitive mind, *Swar*, which receives directly the higher Light. The mind, the act, the vital, emotional, substantial existence, all becomes full of the glory and the intuition, the power and the light of the divine Sun,—*tat savitur varen'yam bhargo devasya*.¹ The lower mental existence is transformed into an image and reflection of the higher Divine. *Aporn'wvanta tama ā pariv'itam, swar n'a śukram tanvanta ā rajah*.

This verse closes the general description of the perfect and final movement of the Ashwins. In the fourth the Rishi Vamadeva turns to his own ascension, his own offering of the Soma, his voyage and sacrifice; he claims for it their beatific and glorifying action. The mouths of the Ashwins are made to drink of the sweetness; in his sacrifice, then, let them drink of it. *Madhwah pivatam madhupbhīr āsabhīh*. Let them yoke their chariot for the honey, their chariot beloved of men; *uta pr'iyam madhune yunjāthām ratham*. For man's movement, his progressive activity, is made by them glad in all its paths with that very honey and sweetness of the Ananda. *A vartanīm madhunā jivvathas pathah*. For they bear the skin full and overflowing with its honey. *Dr'itum vahethe madhumantam aświnā*. By the action of the Ashwins man's progress towards the beatitude becomes itself beatific; all his travail and struggle and labour grows full of a divine delight. As it is said in the Veda that by Truth is the progress towards the Truth, that is to say by the growing law of the Truth in the mental and physical consciousness we arrive finally beyond mind and body to the superconscious Truth, so here it is indicated that by Ananda is the progress towards the Ananda,—by a divine delight growing in all our members, in all our activities we arrive at the superconscious beatitude.

In the upward movement the horses that draw the chariot of the Ashwins change into birds, into swans, *hansāsah*. The Bird in the Veda is the symbol, very frequently, of the soul liberated and upsoaring, at other times of energies so liberated and upsoaring, winging upwards towards the heights of our being, winging widely with a free flight, no longer involved in the ordinary limited movement or labouring gallop of the Life-energy of the Horse, Ashwa. Such are the energies that draw the free car of the Lords of Delight, when there dawns on us the Sun of the Truth. These winged movements are full of the honey showered from the overflowing skin, *madhumantah*. They are unassailable, *asr'idhah*, they come to no hurt in their flight; or, the sense may be, they make no false or hurtful movement. And they are golden-winged, *hiraṇ'yaparṇah*. Gold is the symbolic colour of the light of Surya. The wings of these energies

¹ The great phrase of the Gayatri R. V. III. 62.10.

SELECTED HYMNS

are the full, satisfied attaining movement, *parṇa*, of his luminous knowledge. For these are the birds that awake with the Dawn; these are the winged energies that come forth from their nest when the feet of the daughter of Heaven press the levels of our human mentality, *divo asya sanavi*. Such are the swans that bear the swift-riding Twins. *Hansāso ye vam madhumanto asr'idho, hiraṇ'yaparṇi'ā uhuva uṣarbudhah.*

Full of the honey these winged energies shower on us as they rise the abundance of the waters of heaven, the full outpouring of the high mental consciousness; they are instinct with ecstasy, with rapture, with the intoxication of the immortal wine; and they touch, they come into conscious contact with that superconscious being which is eternally in possession of the ecstasy, rapturous for ever with its divine intoxication. *Udapruto mandino mandimspr'isah.* Drawn by them the Lords of delight come to the Rishi's Soma-offerings like bees to tricklings of honey; *madhvah na maksah savanāni gachchhathah.* Makers themselves of the sweetness, they like the bees seek whatever sweetness can serve them as their material for more delight.

In the sacrifice the same movement of general illumination already described as the result of the ascending flight of the Ashwins is now described as being effected by the aid of the fires of Agni. For the flames of the Will, the divine Force burning up in the soul, are also drenched with the overflowing sweetness and therefore they perform perfectly from day to day their great office of leading the sacrifice¹ progressively to its goal. For that progress they woo with their flaming tongues the daily visitation of the brilliant Ashwins who are bright with the light of the intuitive illuminations and uphold them with their thought of flashing energy.² *Svadhvarāso madhumanta agnaya usrā jarante prati vastor aswinā.*

This aspiration of Agni happens when the Sacrificer with pure hands, with a perfectly discerning vision, with power in his soul to travel to the end of its pilgrimage, to the goal of the sacrifice through all obstacles, breaking all opposers, has pressed out the immortalising wine with the pressing-stones and that too becomes full of the honey of the Ashwins. *Yan mktahastas taran'ir vichakṣan'o somam suṣāva madhumantam adr'ibih.* For the individual's delight in things is met by the Ashwins' triple satisfactions and by the fourth, the delight pouring from the Truth. The cleansed hands of the Sacrificer, *mktahastah*, are possibly symbolic³ of the purified physical being; the power comes from a fulfilled life-energy; the force of clear mental vision, *vichakṣan'a*, is the sign of the truth-illuminated mind. These are the conditions in mind, life and body

¹ *Adhwara*, the word for sacrifice, is really an adjective and the full phrase is *adhvara yajna*, sacrificial action travelling on the path, the sacrifice that is of the nature of a progression or journey. Agni, the Will, is the leader of the sacrifice.

² *Cavrayā dhnyā* R. V. I. 3. 2.

³ The hand or arm is often, however, otherwise symbolic, especially when it is the two hands or arms of Indra that are in question.

for the overflowing of the honey over the triple satisfactions of the Ashwins.

When the sacrificer has thus pressed out the honey-filled delight of things in his sacrifice, the flames of the Will are able to drink them from near; they are not compelled to bring them meagrely or with pain from a distant and hardly accessible plane of consciousness. Therefore, drinking immediately and freely, they become full of an exultant force and swiftness and run and race about over the whole field of our being to extend and build up the lower consciousness into the shining image of the world of free and luminous Mind. *Ākenīpaso ahabhr davidhwatah, swarṇ'a śukram tanvanta ā rajah.* The formula used is repeated without variation from the second Rik; but here it is the flames of the Will full of the fourfold satisfaction that do the work. There the free upsoaring of the gods by the mere touch of the Light and without effort; here the firm labour and aspiration of man in his sacrifice. For then it is by Time, by the days, that the work is perfected, *ahabhuh*, by successive dawns of the Truth each with its victory over the night, by the unbroken succession of the sisters of which we have had mention in the hymn to the divine Dawn. Man cannot seize or hold at once all that the illumination brings to him; it has to be repeated constantly so that he may grow in the light.

But not only the fires of the Will are at work to transform the lower consciousness. The Sun of Truth yokes also his lustrous coursers and is in movement; *sūraś cid aśwān yuyajāna iyate.* The Ashwins too take knowledge for the human consciousness of all the paths of its progress so that it may effect a complete, harmonious and many-sided movement. This movement advancing in many paths is combined in the light of the divine knowledge by the spontaneous self-arranging action of Nature which she assumes when the will and the knowledge are wedded in the perfect harmony of a fully self-conscious, as intuitively guided action. *Viśvan anu swadhayā cetathās pathah.*

Vamadeva closes his hymn. He has been able to hold firmly the shining Thought with its high illumination and has expressed in himself by the shaping and fixing power of the Word the chariot, that is to say, the immortal movement of the delight of the Ashwins; the movement of a bliss that does not fade or grow old or exhaust itself,—it is ageless and undecaying, *ajarah*,—because it is drawn by perfect and liberated energies and not by the limited and soon exhausted, soon recalcitrant horses of the human vitality. *Pra vām avocam aświnā dhiyandhāh, rathah svaśvo ajaro yo asti.* In this movement they traverse in a moment all the worlds of the lower consciousness, covering it with their speeding delights, and so arrive to that universal enjoyment in man full of his offering of the Soma-wine by which they can lead him, puissantly entering into it, through all opposers and to the great goal. *Yena sadyah pari rajānsi yātho, haviṣmantam taraṇ'im bhojam accha.*

SANSKRIT RESEARCH

(A Review, first published in "Arya" 1916, of an Anglo-Sanskrit Quarterly, conducted by the Sanskrit Academy of India, Bangalore, and edited by Pundit Lingesa Mahabhagawat)

THE appearance of this Anglo-Sanskrit Quarterly "devoted to research work in all fields of Indian Antiquity" is a welcome sign of the recent development towards a wider culture, a more flexible and strenuous scholarship and a more original thinking which promises to lift the Indian mind out of the rut of secondhand provincialism and sterile repetition of commonplaces into which the vices of its school and university education had betrayed it and to equip it for the important contribution we may expect it to make to the world's increasing stock of knowledge.

There has been a considerable expansion in this country, both in English and the vernaculars, of that ordinary periodical literature which caters for the popular mind and supplies it with snippets of knowledge, facile information and ready but not always very valuable opinions on all sorts of subjects. But there has been hitherto little or nothing corresponding to those more serious publications common in every European country which appeal to a more limited audience but succeed in popularising within those limits a more serious and original thinking and a more thorough knowledge in each branch of human enquiry. Attempts have been made but, outside the field of religion and philosophy, they have usually foundered in their inception for want of adequate support; they have not found, as they would have found elsewhere, an interested circle of readers. Now, however, there ought to be a sufficient number of cultivated minds interested and competent in Sanskrit scholarship and the research into Indian antiquity to ensure an adequate support and an increasing usefulness for this new Quarterly.

The second (October) number of the Quarterly is before me and its sound editing and the value and interest of its contents promise well for its future. There are especially two very solid articles, one by Mr. Tilak on "A Missing Verse in the Sankhya Karikas", and another by Professor R.D. Ranade of the Ferguson College headed "Greek and Sanskrit: a Comparative Study", but there is no article without its interest and value. I note that in this number all the contributors, with one exception, are either from Maharashtra or the Madras

Presidency. It is to be hoped that the editor will be able to secure the cooperation of Sanskrit scholars in the north so that this Review may become an All-India organ of Indian research.

Mr. Tilak's article shows all the thoroughness and acuteness which that great scholar brings to his work great or small whether he is seeking for the original home of the Aryans in the cryptic mass of the Rig Veda or restoring with his rare powers of deduction a lost verse in the Karikas. The point he seeks to establish, though apparently a small one, has really a considerable importance. He points out that there is a consensus of authority for the existence of 70 verses in Ishwarakrishna's Sankhya-Karikas, but, if we exclude the last three which do not belong to the doctrinal part of the text, we have both in the Indian text and in the Chinese version only 69; at the same time he shows that both Gaudapada's Bhashya and the commentary in the Chinese version contain a passage developing a refutation of four possible subtler causes of the world, Ishwara, Purusha, Kala and Swabhava (God, the Soul, Time and Nature) rejected by the Sankhyas a refutation which logically ought to be but is not found in the text itself. From the passage in the Bhashya he seeks to reestablish the sense and even the language of the missing verse. It seems to me that he has established both the fact of the missing verse and its substance. But the interesting point is the reason assigned by him for the loss of the verse; it was, he thinks, no accident, but a deliberate suppression made at a time when the Sankhya philosophy was being re-explained by thinkers like Vijnanabhikshu in a Vedantic sense. If so, the point made sheds a very interesting light on the historic course of philosophical thought in India.

The general line which that development followed arises more indirectly from an interesting and carefully reasoned article by Mr. Y. Subbarao on the question of the originality of Shankara's philosophy. Mr. Subbarao seeks to establish his point that it was no new system of thought which Shankara created, but only the re-statement perhaps in a more developed form of a very ancient school of Vedantic interpretation. Certainly, it cannot be supposed that Shankara invented a new philosophy out of his own brain; he believed himself to be establishing against attack the real sense of the Vedantic philosophy founded on the original texts of its canon and supported by the best tradition. Nor does any great thinker really invent a system new-born from his own intellect; what he does is to take up the material available to him in the past history of thought, to choose, select, reject to present new lights on old ideas, to develop latent suggestions, to bring into prominence what was before less prominent or not so trenchant and definite, to give a fresh, striking and illuminating sense to old terms, to combine what was before not at all or else ill-combined; in doing so he creates; his philosophy, though not new in its materials,

is new in the whole effect it produces and the more powerful light that in certain directions it conveys to the thinking mind. The question is whether Shankara's system was not new in this sense and, though the previous material still subsisting is insufficient to decide the question, it must, I think, be answered provisionally in the affirmative. Adwaitavada undoubtedly existed before, but it was the form Shankara gave it which made it a clear, well-thought-out and powerfully trenchant philosophy and put his name at the head of Indian metaphysicians.

Mr. Subbarao admits that it is impossible to establish an exclusive Adwaitavada, much less the Mayavada, from the Veda, Upanishads, Brahmasutras or the Gita. It is impossible not because the great thinkers who gave us these writings thought confusedly or without a clear grasp of principles, but because theirs was an entirely different method. India began with a synthetic and intuitive manner of thinking based not upon logical distinctions and verbal oppositions, but upon the facts of spiritual experience and vision. In such synthetic and intuitive philosophies truths are arranged according to the place of each in the actual fact of things, as different laws and generalisations are arranged in Science, each positive in its own field and each having its proper relation to the others. The perfection of this method is to be found in the Upanishads and the Gita; and that is the reason why all attempts to interpret these great works by the methods of logical debate and the rigorous exclusions dear to the analytic metaphysician always fail even in the strongest hands; they raise questions about the sense of these works which cannot be conclusively solved, but must necessarily lead to eternal debate, because the method is wrong and the original work itself never intended to cause or countenance such discussions. Only a synthetic method of interpretation can explain a synthetic and intuitive philosophy.

The analytical tendency began with the gradual divisions which ended in the establishment of the six philosophical schools. Each of them claims to be justified by the Veda and from its own point of view each is quite in the right, for the primary data of each are there in the sacred writings. It is where they press to exclusive conclusions and deny and refute each other that they can no longer truly claim Vedic authority. Even the Buddhists could, if they had chosen, have based themselves on the Veda, for there are passages which, if taken by themselves, seem to deny the Atman and attribute all to Karma or to assert the Non-Existent as the source of things. The perfect resort to the analytical method came later; it was employed with great effect though often rather naively by the Buddhists, but it was Shankara who applied rigorously the analytical method of the intellectual reason in all its trenchant clearness and force to metaphysics. Hence the greatness of his position in the history of

Indian thought. From his time forward Indian metaphysics was bound to the wheels of the analytical and intellectual mind. Still, it is to be noted that while the philosophers thus split the catholicity of the ancient Truth into warring schools, the general Indian mind was always overpoweringly attracted by the synthetical tendency. The Gita seems to be in part the expression of such a synthetic reaction, the Puranas show constantly the same tendency and even into the philosophical schools it made its entry.

Prof. Ranade's article on Greek and Sanskrit carries us into another field, that of Comparative Philology. His object is in a brief scope to establish the identical origin of Greek and Sanskrit in that which is most essential in the growth of a language, its grammatical forms and syntactical peculiarities. He has had to allow himself only a very small space for so large and important a subject, but within these narrow limits he has done his work with great thoroughness and, subject to a few minor reservations, with a minute accuracy. It is to be regretted that by printing the Greek words in their proper character instead of in Roman type Mr. Ranade has made this interesting essay unintelligible to all but a very few Indian readers. He lays down the principle that the words of each language should be printed in its own type and that anyone who wishes to study Comparative Philology must take the trouble to familiarise himself with the original alphabets. This is a counsel of perfection which is not practicable in India, nor indeed on any large scale in Europe either. If for instance a scholar were dealing with the philology of the Aryan languages and had to cite largely verbal forms both from the European tongues and from Sanskrit and its Indian descendants he would be compelled on this principle to require at least nine different types from the Press to which he entrusted his work. No Press would be able to meet the demand and very few even of his learned readers but would be baffled by the variety. Mr. Ranade himself gives us German words and a German sentence, but not in the Gothic character which alphabetical purism would demand.

There are three or four statements in the article to which objection can be taken and, since in philology even the smallest details are of importance, the learned writer will not object to my pointing them out with some emphasis; in one case at least he has fallen into a serious error by correcting which he may add an interesting and not unimportant subsection to his array of grammatical and syntactical identities between the two languages. I do not understand in the first place what is meant by the statement that "in Greek no difference is made between the dentals and the linguals and they are *fused* together." If it is meant that the Greek language possessed both dental and lingual sounds but expressed them by the same characters, I do not think this can be correct. The distribution of dentals and linguals in the various languages is one of the

most curious phenomena in the history of linguistic phonetics and deserves a closer inquiry than has been accorded to it. The Latin and Celtic languages reject the lingual and use only the dental; English on the other hand prefers the linguals, though it uses occasionally the dental *t*, *th* and *d*, all of which it represents by *th*, as in *with*, *thin*, *though*,—a desperately clumsy device thoroughly in keeping with the chaotic wildness of English orthography. Everyone in India knows the difficulty an Englishman finds in pronouncing the Indian dentals; he turns them resolutely into linguals. On the contrary a Frenchman, who has not educated himself into the right English pronunciation, will turn the English lingual into a dental; he will say *feasth* instead of *feast*, *noth* instead of *not*, and pronounce *do* as if it were the English *though*. A similar peculiarity is one of the chief features of the brogue, the Irish mispronunciation of English speech; for the natural Irish tongue cannot manage the hard lingual sound in such words as *Peter* and *shoulder*, it mollifies them into true dentals. I have noticed the same peculiarity in the pronunciation of a Spanish actress playing in English on a London stage; otherwise perfect, it produced a strange impression by its invariable transformation of the harder English into the softer Latin sound. Now Greek must certainly have belonged to the Latin-Celtic group in this phonetic peculiarity; otherwise the difference would have been too striking to escape the sensitive ear of the ancient poets and scholars. It seems to me therefore that in the comparative scheme of the two alphabets the Sanskrit linguals should be marked as absent in the Greek and, not as Mr. Ranade represents them, correspondent equally with the dentals to the Greek *tau*, *theta*, and *delta*.

In the comparison of the declensions Mr. Ranade asserts that Greek feminine nouns in long *a* like *chôrâ* correspond in their endings to Sanskrit nouns of the type of *bhâryâ* and Greek nouns in long *e* like *tîmê* to Sanskrit nouns of the type of *dâsî*. Surely this is an error. The writer has fallen into it because he was looking only at the Attic dialect, but the Attic is only one variation of the Greek language and it is misleading to study it by itself. As a matter of fact, this *â* and this *ê* both represent the same original sound which must have been the feminine termination in *â*; only the Doric dialect prefers always the original *â*, the Ionic modifies it into *ê*, and the Attic standing between the Doric and the Ionic belts makes a compromise. In the Attic when this feminine *â* is preceded by a vowel it remains unmodified, as also usually when it is preceded by *r*, but if it is preceded by a consonant it becomes *ê*; thus *philiâ*, *chôrâ*, but *tîmê*, *kômê*, Ionic will say *phillê* and not *philiâ*; Doric *tîmâ* and not *tîmê*. This is enough to negative Mr. Ranade's identification of this Attic *ê* with the Sanskrit feminine *î*. Certainly there are cases in which Sanskrit uses this *î* termination where Attic has the *ê*, as in *chaturthî* and *tetartê* but this simply means that the Greek

has rejected the Sanskrit deviation into the *i* form and kept to the more regular *â* which here too will appear in its pure form in the Doric.¹

In the comparison of tenses Mr. Ranade makes the rather curious assertion that the Sanskrit Conditional does not occur in any other language except perhaps German; but surely if the “*wurden gétodet worden sein*” corresponds to the Sanskrit *abhavishyat*, the French conditionals e.g., *auraient été tués* and the English “*would have been killed*” ought equally to be considered as parallel syntactical constructions; they have the same sense and with a slight difference the same form as the German.

Finally, Mr. Ranade tells us that there are no such compounds in Greek as in Sanskrit and again that there are no *dwandwa*, *karmadhâraya* and *bahuvrîhi* compounds in Greek, although there are verbs compounded with prepositions. I am at a loss to understand how so sound a scholar can have come to make a statement so contrary to all the facts. The power of the Greek language to make compounds is one of its most notable characteristics and its rich though never intemperate use is one of the great beauties of the Greek poetical style. When the Romans came into contact with Greek literature, their earlier poets tried to introduce this faculty into Latin and even Virgil describes the sea as *velivolum*, sail-flying, i.e. with sails flying over it like the wings of birds through the air, but the usage was too contrary to the Latin genius to succeed. Not only did the Greek compound prepositions with its verbs, but it compounded nouns and verbs together. Thus from *nau-archos*, shipruler, i.e. admiral, they made *nau-archein*, to be an admiral; nor did they hesitate before such forms as *paido-poiein*, to beget children, *paido-tribein*, to train boys, *mnêsikakem*, to remember wrongs, *neotto-tropheisthai*, to be brought up like the young of a bird. In fact with the exception of nominal *dwandwas* the Greek illustrates all the main varieties of the Sanskrit compound. For it is capable of such compounds as *pseudo-martur*, a false witness, *pseudo-christos*, a false Christ, *chauno-polites*, a silly city; as *andro-phonos*, man-killing, *paid-oletor*, a destroyer of one's children, *phusi-zoos*, life-producing, *koruth-aiolos*, helmet-glancing, *lao-kataratos*, cursed by the people, *thumo-leon*, heart-lion, as *anabadên* and *katabadên* answering to the Sanskrit *avyayibhâva*; as *oxu-thumos*, sharp-passioned *oxu-schoinos*, having sharp reeds, *polu-teknos*, having many children, *io-stephanos*, violet crowned. The language indeed pullulates with compounds. It is true that they are usually composed of two members only, but compounds of three members are found, as *tris-kako-daimon*, thrice-evil-fated and Aristophanes even perpetrates such forms as *glischr-antilog-exepitriptos* and *sphra-gid-onuch-argo-kometes*.

¹ This phonetic variation is a general rule in the dialects and not confined to the feminine termination.

I have dwelt on these points because they leap to the eye in the perfection otherwise complete of an admirable essay which, I hope, is only the first sketch of a more important treatise. But with the exception of the last they are minor points and do not seriously detract from the completeness of the exposition. Especially new and interesting are the parallel between Greek and Vedic accents and the rearrangement of Greek conjugations according to the Sanskrit classification. The common origin of Greek and Sanskrit is apparent enough, but like other philologists Mr. Ranade is far too sure of the conclusion he draws from it. I believe him to be right in thinking that the Indian Aryans and the Greeks came from one stock, but when he says that this has been proved beyond dispute by the discoveries of the philologist he is going much too fast. Common origin of language or even common language does not prove common ethnic origin. The French and Spaniards are not Latins nor the Irish of Dublin and Munster Anglo-Saxons. From the possible causes of linguistic similarity which the writer has given he has omitted one, conquest and cultural pressure. According to the theory of the Italian ethnologist, Sergi, all the Mediterranean races of Northern Africa and Southern Europe belong to one "Mediterranean" stock ancient and highly civilised which was conquered by Aryan savages and and this accounts for their "Aryan" languages. It is the same theory that now prevails in a different form with regard to the Aryan conquest of a highly civilised Dravidian India. Philology can bring no sufficient argument to contradict it.

Mr. Ranade deprecates the scorn of the linguistically ignorant for philology, but we must not forget that in Europe it is not the ignorant alone who feel this contempt, but the scientist, and that there is a certain justification for their contempt; this was admitted by so great a philological scholar as Renan when in the evening of his days he had to apologise for his favourite pursuits as "our petty conjectural sciences." Philology is in fact not yet a science, but rather far too largely a structure of ingenuities and plausible conjectures. It set out with the hope of discovering the origin of language and the scientific laws of its development, but it has failed entirely; and it failed not because they are undiscoverable,—I believe the clue is there lying ready to our hands in the Sanskrit language,—but because it strayed off to the facile pursuit of obvious similarities and identities instead of delving patiently and scrupulously, as all true Science must do, behind the outward appearances of things to get back at origins and embryonic indices. And on its scanty and uncertain data it began to build up enormous structures of theory such as the common origin of Aryan-speaking races, their original habitat, their common form of culture before separation, etc. Such facile play of an ingenious imagination is still the failing of the scholar and justifies to a certain extent the scorn of the patient,

accurate and scrupulous physical scientist for the freaks and pretensions of the "philolog."

Not altogether is it justified, for philology has made several interesting and useful discoveries, established a few minor generalisations and, above all, substituted a sounder though not yet entirely sound critical method for the fantastic licence of the old unscientific philology which, once it left the sure ground of grammar, was capable of anything and everything however absurd or impossible. But much has to be learned and a great deal more unlearned before we can measure ourselves with the physical scientist or deserve his approval.

It is here that much is to be hoped from the Indian intellect which is more accustomed than the European to move with a penetrating subtlety and accuracy in the things of the mind. But to justify the hope it must first get rid on one side of its attachment to the methods of the Pundit and his subservience to traditional authority and on the other not give itself bound hand and foot to the method of the European scholar or imitate too freely that swiftly leaping ingenious mind of his which gives you in a trice a Scythian or a Persian Buddha, identifies conclusively Murghab and Maurya, Mayasura and Ahura Mazda and generally constructs with magical rapidity the wrong animal out of the wrong bone. We have to combine the laboriousness of the Pundit, the slow and patient conscientiousness of the physical scientist abhorrent of a too facile conclusion and the subtlety of the psychologist in order to deserve the same success in these other sciences and to lift them beyond the shifting field of conjecture.

Sanskrit Research gives us Sanskrit articles as well as English with the laudable object of bringing together with a view to mutual helpfulness the old and the new scholarship. Sanskrit ought still to have a future as a language of the learned and it will not be a good day for India when the ancient tongue ceases entirely to be written or spoken. But if it is to survive, it must get rid of the curse of the heavy pedantic style contracted by it in its decline with the lumbering impossible compounds and the overweight of hair-splitting erudition. The Sanskrit articles in this number are learned and laborious but they suffer heavily from this defect of style. If the contact established by the *Sanskrit Research* can teach the new scholarship the patient thoroughness of the old and the old the flexibility and penetrating critical sense of the new, it will have done to both a great and much-needed service.

FOR THE NEW-COMER

(From Sri Aurobindo's Unpublished Letters)

It is quite right and part of the right consciousness in sadhana that you should feel drawn in your heart towards the Mother and aspire for the vision and realisation of her presence. But there should not be any kind of restlessness joined to this feeling. The feeling should be quietly intense. It will then be easier for the sense of the presence to come and to grow in you.

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Aspire to realisation, but do not be over-eager. Keep yourself quietly open and allow the Mother's force to work in you, that will bring you the necessary realisation.

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It is the soul, the psychic being in you, behind the heart, that is awake and wants to concentrate the mind on the Divine. It is the nature of the mind to go out to other things, but now when it does that, there is the unease in the heart, the psychic sorrow because the heart feels at once that this is wrong and the head also aches because of the resistance to the Divine Force at work. This is a thing that often happens at an early stage, after the opening of the consciousness to the sadhana.

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All things are the Divine because the Divine is there, but hidden not manifest; when the mind goes out to things, it is not with the sense of the Divine in them, but for the appearances only which conceal the Divine. It is necessary therefore for you as a sadhak to turn entirely to the Mother in whom the Divine is manifest and not run after the appearances, the desire of which or the interest in which prevents you from meeting the Divine. Once the being is consecrated, then it can see the Divine everywhere—and then it can include all things in the one consciousness without a separate interest or desire.

THE SOUL OF A PLANT*

SRI AUROBINDO

THE title sounds like a phrase of idealistic or even fanciful poetry fit to precede some reverie or ethereal dream of the imagination; but actually it is no more than the final idea which naturally suggests itself after a perusal of the accounts given in English journals of the strictly controlled and severely careful experiments and results demonstrated by Dr. J. C. Bose in London and Vienna. This distinguished scientist was one of the earliest experimenters in that field of research which has brought about the use of wireless telegraphy. But he turned aside subsequently to a deeper line of original experiment and one likely to be more fruitful in its results to human knowledge. Following an absolutely original line, inventing his own apparatus, of the most simple yet subtle delicacy, and constructing them by the hands of Indian artisans, working without collaborators and with the smallest modicum of recognition by his fellow-scientists, he has pursued his investigations to a result so complete and impeccable that the scientists of Vienna are said to have exclaimed, when they saw his demonstrations, "You have left us nothing to do!" The nature of these results may be best understood by an interesting account in one of the London dailies which brings out very clearly the import of Dr. Bose's discoveries. They are of such importance that we think it well to quote the whole article *in extenso*.

"In these days it seems to be impossible to live for more than few weeks at a time without receiving some more or less serious mental shock. Soon after you have recovered from seeing an aeroplane weighing half a ton leave the ground, you are called on to make a mental adjustment which will reconcile you to travelling in a train hanging in mid-air, and in another day or two you may find yourself face to face with the adventure of speaking to someone fifty miles away without the aid even of a wire. It is getting a little difficult to keep up with Science.

"Just now Professor J. C. Bose—a Hindu scientist who has been sent by the Government of India to lay the results of his discoveries before the Western scientific world—is giving people shocks in Maida Vale. If you watch his astonishing experiments with plants and flowers, you have to leave an old world behind and enter a new one. The world where plants are merely plants, becomes

* From *Arya*, 1914.

THE SOUL OF A PLANT

mercilessly out of date, and you are forced abruptly into a world where plants are almost human beings. Professor Bose makes you take the leap when he demonstrates that plants have a nervous system quite comparable with that of men, and makes them write down their life-story. So you step into yet another world.

“Perhaps the most amazing experiment is one showing the actual death of a plant. This does not sound very wonderful—but have you ever seen a plant die? You have seen it gradually die, fade and wither; but it actually died long before it faded. Have you ever seen it die abruptly, as a man dies? Have you seen the death-struggle of a plant? That is what Professor Bose shows you—and it is a disturbing thing to watch. It gives a plant a human quality.

“The experiment is not easy to describe; but this is briefly what you see. In a darkened room you see a strip of light on the wall, and this light moves slowly to the left. Quite suddenly it hesitates and quivers and struggles, and then moves slowly to the right. It is when the light hesitates and quivers and struggles that you are watching the death of the plant.

“One of the Professor’s great difficulties was to know how to kill a plant suddenly enough. When you pick a rose you kill it, but not abruptly. There is still a little nourishment for it in the stem, and its collapse is gradual. Such a death does not lend itself to dramatic demonstration. But Professor Bose found that water at a high temperature—say, 140 degrees Fahrenheit would kill a plant suddenly, and he worked out a very ingenious way of showing this. First, he cuts the stem of a plant so that it forms a spiral, and on the outside of the spiral he fixes a little piece of glass which will reflect light that is thrown on to it. Then he puts the stem in warm water. Under the congenial influence of the warmth the tendency is for the stem of the plant to expand. It enjoys the stimulant of the warmth, just as a man will enjoy the stimulant of a hot bath, and it shows its appreciation by expanding.

“Being cut in the form of a spiral the stem is bound to turn slightly, as it expands, and this movement is thrown by the little piece of glass through a lens on to the wall. As the temperature of the water is gradually increased, the movement, shown so dramatically by the strip of light on the wall, increases. But there comes a moment when the heat of the water is too much for the plant—when, in fact, it is in danger of being scalded to death just as a man would be scalded if he were held in water which was gradually heated to boiling-point. And the plant’s nervous system collapses just as the man’s system would collapse. The strip of light on the wall pauses and quivers for a second, and then returns along its path. It has died suddenly—scalded to death—and the backward movement of the light is but a dramatic reproduction of the contraction of its body—that contraction which immediately follows death.”

So far the phenomena noted are those of vital activities associated with the physical states we call life and death; but then there come others which are usually associated with mental consciousness, so that the writer of the article is induced to use such phrases as "the feelings of plants", "the perception part of the plant", "the plant's power of perception".

"Other experiments showing the feelings of plants are equally surprising. Professor Bose employs a compulsive force which causes the plant to give an answering signal—a twitch in reply. These signals are automatically recorded on the delicate instruments the Professor has invented and the records reveal the hidden feelings of the plant. Some idea of the delicacy of the instruments may be gained from the fact that they can record a time interval so short as the 1,000th part of the duration of a heart-beat.

"The Professor connected a plant with the instrument, and then lightly struck one of the leaves. At once it was clear that the plant felt the blow. That is, its whole nervous system was affected, and its pulse, written down by the ingenious recorder, varied with the severity of the blow. The Professor gave the plant a little stimulant. At once the height of the pulse was increased. It was given a depressing drug and the effect was quickly seen in the feebler beating of the pulse.

"There was something almost humiliating in this sensitiveness of a mere plant to the very same agents to which men and women respond. No one would object to a plant being refreshed by water; but what right has it to enjoy, as it were, a cup of tea? When Professor Bose gave the plant a dose of alcohol, its response through the recorder was ludicrously unsteady. One had the humiliation of watching a drunken plant. The plant is, indeed, always too brotherly. Too much food makes it lethargic and incapable of reply, but the removal of the excess removes the lethargy.

"The resonant recorder indicates the time taken by the plant to perceive a shock, and here again there is considerable likeness to humanity, for a stoutish plant will give its response in a slow and lordly fashion, but a thin one attains the acme of its excitement in an incredibly short time—in the case of mimosa in the six-hundredth part of a second. The perception part of the plant becomes very sluggish under fatigue. When excessively tired or bored it loses for the time all power of perception, and requires a rest-cure of at least half an hour to restore its equanimity.

"That the too sheltered life is no better for plants than for man is suggested by another interesting experiment. A plant which carefully protected under glass from outside blows looked most sleek and flourishing, but its conducting power was found atrophied or paralysed. Yet when a succession of blows were rained on this effete and bloated specimen, the stimulus canalized its own path

of conduction, and the plant soon became more alert and responsive, and its nervous impulses were very much quickened.

“It is impossible for a spectator of the Professor’s experiments to make any attempt to separate himself from the rest of life. In the matter of automatic heart-beats the Indian plant *Desmodium Gyrens* shows remarkable activity, and Professor Bose, by obtaining records of these pulsations, shows that the throbbings in the plant are affected by external agents in precisely the same way as the heart-beats of an animal. Thus, in plant, as in animal life, the pulse-frequency is increased under the action of warmth and lessened under cold. Under ether the throbbing of the plant is arrested, but revival is possible when the vapour is blown off. Chloroform is more fatal. There is, too, an extraordinary parallelism in the fact that those poisons which arrest the beat of the heart in a particular way arrest the plant pulsation in a corresponding manner. Also, taking advantage of the antagonistic reactions of specific poisons, Professor Bose has been able to revive a poisoned leaf by the application of another counteracting poison.

“To find whether the plant varies in its state of responsiveness, Professor Bose has subjected *mimosa* (a plant especially sensitive and useful for this line of work) to uniform shocks repeated every hour of the day and night. And he was rewarded by the discovery that plants keep very late hours. Contrary to current views, the plant is awake till early in the morning, falling into deepest sleep between 6 and 9 a. m. when it becomes quite insensitive. It wakes gradually, and by noon is fully awake, becoming lethargic as the afternoon passes, to sleep again in the early morning.”

Finally, following out the inevitable suggestions of all these remarkable phenomena, the writer proceeds to draw the moral,—the lesson which Nature is always lying in wait to give to the self-confined egoism of man.

“The superiority of a man must, in fact, be established on a foundation more secure than sensibility. The most sensitive organ by which we can detect an electric current is our tongue. An average European can perceive a current as feeble as 6.4 microamperes (a microampere is a millionth part of the unit of a current). Possibly the tongue of a Celt may be more excitable. But the plant *mimosa* is ten times more sensitive than this, and it is not in the case of a special plant that this sensitiveness is felt. Nothing could appear more stolid than the common radish. But under the persuasion of Professor Bose’s instruments it responds vigorously to stimuli.

“That the establishment of this similarity of responsive actions in the plant and animal will be found of the highest significance is evident from the enthusiastic reception of these discoveries at Oxford, Cambridge, London and Continental scientific centres. By study of the vegetable organisms the more

complex physiological reactions of the human being may be understood. Thus, as Professor Bose says, community throughout the great ocean of life is seen to outweigh apparent dissimilarity. Diversity is swallowed up in unity."

Diversity swallowed up in unity!—It might have been a phrase from some free rendering of an ancient Upanishad. But how much precisely are we justified in deducing from these results produced by the severest tests of physical research, accepted by the scientific opinion of Europe and considered by thinkers of distinction to be of great importance for the future development of the Science of Psychology? Dr. Bose, then a young and unknown scientist, set out to prove the existence of nervous life in metals and plants by showing that they return precisely the same responses to the same stimuli as human beings. In the vegetable kingdom his thesis has been triumphantly proved. These are, obviously, successful experimental observations in the physiology of plants, their vital habits, their nervous responses, and we are now justified by them in saying that man and the plant are one body and one life. Can we go farther and say that they are also to a certain extent observations in plant psychology or that Dr. Bose has gone beyond his original thesis and established between man and the plant a unity of the incipient mind?

If we accept the method of the modern psychologists who hold the physical and the nervous life to be the basis and the material of mind, we are practically compelled to say, Yes. The responses of the plant are evidently identical with those which in man are translated in mental values as physical and nervous sensations; there is in the plant an incipient mind, a rudimentary soul; for it not only lives and dies, wakes and sleeps, but it makes the responses which in us would be pleasure and pain. Is there nothing, then, in the plant which corresponds to the perceptive element in man? Has it, if we may say so, nervous sensation only and not mental perception? Naturally, a rudimentary organisation of perceptive faculty which not being coupled with conception, the second of the two bright horses of Indra, would not imply a self-conscious Ego.

Scientifically, perhaps, we are not warranted to go so far, but that intuitive logic which is, after all, as often justified by result as the experimental, certainly demands the presence of such a faculty, however much it may linger on the verge of the sub-conscious. The question, at any rate, is raised irresistibly by Dr. Bose's experiments and demands a solution. It is doubtful, however, whether it can ever be solved by any method which comes within the limits of scientific orthodoxy. We reach a border-line where the demands of increasing knowledge begin to cry out for an enlargement in the means and methods of enquiry.

In any case, a great step has been made towards the unification of knowledge. A bridge has been built between man and inert matter. Even, if we take

THE SOUL OF A PLANT

Dr. Bose's experiments with metals in conjunction with his experiments on plants, we may hold it to be practically proved for the thinker that Life in various degrees of manifestation and organisation is omnipresent in Matter and is no foreign introduction or accidental development, but was always there to be evolved. Mind, which modern Science has not yet begun rightly to investigate, awaits its turn.

The ancient thinkers knew well that life and mind exist everywhere in essence and vary only by the degree and manner of their emergence and functionings. All is in all and it is out of the complete involution that the complete evolution progressively appears. It is only appropriate that for a descendant of the race of ancient thinkers who formulated that knowledge, should be reserved the privilege of initiating one of the most important among the many discoveries by which experimental Science is confirming the wisdom of his forefathers.

INNER SIGHT AND HEARING*

SRI AUROBINDO

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

*

*

The world you see is in some subtle physical plane where men see the gods according to their own idea and images of them.

*

*

The sounds or voices you hear are like the sights (persons, objects) you see. As there is an inner sight other than the physical, so there is an inner hearing other than that of the external ear, and it can listen to voices and sounds and words of other worlds, other times and places, or those which come from supraphysical beings. But here you must be careful. If conflicting voices try to tell you what to do or not to do, you should not listen to them or reply. It is only myself and the Mother who can tell you what you should or should not do or guide or advise you.

* From Unpublished Letters.

EINSTEIN'S FOUR-DIMENSIONAL CONTINUUM

II

IF Einstein's four-dimensional continuum of space-time is, as we have shown, a reality and a revolutionary one at that because of the actual fusion of space and time in it, is the revolution introduced by it confined to physics, with no bearing on a philosophical view of the world, or does it call for a look by us in a direction beyond materialism?

The actual fusion does not, of course, reduce time to a space-dimension: time is still time, but it acquires the properties of space. A fourth dimension of space would break the limitations of the three space-dimensions: for instance, if one had a fourth space-dimension to move in, one would not be limited by being enclosed in a room covered in the directions of length, breadth and height, for one more direction would remain without any cover and one could enter the room from it. But the time-element would not be changed in any basic sense: time would continue to be a movement from past to present to future just as much as it is now in our normal vision of it. When the dimension of time enters into a four-dimensional continuum and is welded on to space in the way in which within space itself the three dimensions of length, breadth and height are welded to one another, then it is not the spatial limitations of these dimensions that are broken. What are broken are the limitations of time itself for those dimensions—limitations due to time's being a separate dimension from them. If time is fused with space in the continuum whose mathematical structure is specified by Minkowski's elucidation of the background of Einstein's relativities, time without ceasing to be time gets spatialised. To put it more concretely: just as all points of space are co-existent, all instants of time are co-existent—the past and present and future of spatial points co-exist as if they themselves were spread out in space.

Our heads are bound to grow dizzy with this import. But that is no test of its not being the truth. Nor can truth stop being truth when our heads grow dizzier still on our understanding what the scientific concept of causality and determinism becomes in connection with this import. Strict causality and determinism are there in the sense of an unseverable hanging together: the very word "continuum" ensures unbrokenness. But pre-relativity physics took causality and determinism to be working from past to present to future. In

the four-dimensional continuum of actually fused space and time, where the three times co-exist, there is evidently no one such unique direction for causality and determinism to work in. So the scientific use of causality and determinism may be considered as representing for practical purposes the truth only if the experience which leads us to this use is the sole one or the predominant one. It certainly is not the sole one. We have the experience in which we feel a sense of freewill: there we appear to be to some extent unbound by the past and creative of the future and able to re-create the past by depriving it of the effect the scientific use of causality and determinism would ascribe to it as inevitable. We have also the experience in which we feel a sense of goals or ends, of a purpose that seeks realisation as if from a future through the present and which, by causing the present, determines also the past which the present constantly becomes. The whole time-flow then seems in the direction opposite to that which is assumed by science. But, inasmuch as the latter is also never absent in our experience even when we have a sense of freewill and a sense of pre-existing and purpose-realising future and inasmuch as there has been no sure ground for not regarding the future as still to be born rather than as something already real and for regarding the present as co-existent with the past no less than with the future, we have allowed the experience leading to the scientific use of causality and determinism to bulk in our minds above any other. We have let this experience cast on the others a colour of unreality or lesser reality, things to be somehow brought into line with it. With the concept of the four-dimensional continuum we find that there is no reason to give that experience any predominance. So the direction dictated by that experience to causality and determinism can have only a certain degree of truth. Degrees of truth are possessed also by the directions suggested by our sense of freewill and our sense of pre-existing and purpose-realising future.

Perhaps the greatest degree of truth is given by what is actually our time-experience. What we know as time is a continuous present with projections into both the past and the future, projections concealed in the one case except in the form of memory and in the other except in the form of imaginative or predictive anticipation. The primary datum is the present, from which past and future are arrived at by means of theoretical constructions. If this is so, then in view of the impartiality of the four-dimensional continuum, our sense of limited freewill which is associated with the present may be taken by us as the truth predominantly supported by the absolute arrived at in Einsteinian physics.

We may even say that the four-dimensional continuum is precisely such as predominantly must support this truth in the world of threefold time-experience that is ours. For, what do we mean by a co-existence of past and

present and future? Do we not mean an all-comprehensive Now, with no succession of events—a Now of which our continuous present is a faint inkling?

And taking a cue from our own limited Now and its sense of freewill we may surmise that the comprehensive Now of the ordered totality of events in all the three times is an immense multiple creativity. Such a conception does full justice to both the truths involved in the irregular regularity of the four-dimensional continuum: the truth of space by which points stand together and the truth of time by which instants succeed each other—a co-existence coupled with dynamism so that the spread-out events of the three times are the signs of an ordering creativity immense and multiple though non-successive.

It is difficult not to think this creativity the physical counterpart or expression of the freewill of a cosmic consciousness. We have definitely to look beyond materialism if we accept Minkowski's fusion of space and time to be actual. And Einstein's general relativity theory, which came ten years after his special or restricted one, does not in the least forbid us to do so. What that theory does is just to link up material masses with the four-dimensional continuum: it establishes a certain relation between these masses and space-time in the sense that the amount of material mass is proportional to a degree of geometrical structure of space-time and that the accelerations of the masses can be calculated according to the overall space-time structure answering to the comparatively larger or smaller mass-amounts neighbouring one another. Thus the movements of the planets around the sun are said to be in accordance with the more dominating structure in space-time answering to the sun's greater mass than the one answering to the smaller masses of the planets. Newton's force of gravitation which was supposed to act directly from mass to mass is dispensed with and an entirely new notion comes in by which the state of space-time between the disproportionate masses explains their mutual "gravitational" behaviour—a new notion which has passed some crucial tests in which Newton's calculations proved wrong.

The state of space-time involved is called in technical mathematical language "curvature". Newton had considered space to be "flat": just as on a flat surface the natural motion, as well as the shortest line between two points, is straight, so also in flat space the natural motion is straight and a straight line is the "geodesic" or shortest distance between two points. Space thus considered is known as Euclidian. Although some geometricians in the nineteenth century had evolved non-Euclidian geometries of space, nobody ever imagined that these could correspond to reality. But when, as we saw, Minkowski set up the formula of an irregularly regular four-dimensional continuum, the minus sign of the fourth dimension prevented the geometrical properties from being quite Euclidian as they would have been if no irregular feature had been there.

His geometry was semi-Euclidian or hyperbolic rather than non-Euclidian. However, it opened Einstein's eyes to further possibilities and, when he attempted to bring into his scheme the accelerated motion characteristic of "gravitational" effect, he applied to the four-dimensional continuum the spherical geometry of Riemann, the geometry which Riemann had extended to space of three or more dimensions from a curved surface instead of the Euclidian geometry which had been extended to space from a flat surface. Einstein discovered that in space-time the simplest analogue of the quantity which for a curved surface is termed "curvature" solved his problem if he made the curvature proportional in a certain manner to the amount of material mass present. The curvature of space-time calculated in the region of the sun's neighbourhood gave in space the exact orbits of the planets and in time the exact change of speed-rhythm which the planets exhibit as they move nearer or farther from the sun in their various ellipses.

What bearing have the several features of the general relativity theory on the beyond-materialism interpretation? First, if the continuum is capable of geometrical structure, it must be "substantial" in some sense: the ordering, immense and multiple though non-successive, would represent not only a cosmic consciousness but also a cosmic being. The pointer away from materialism seems strengthened. Secondly, the material masses by being brought into relation with the "substantial" continuum may themselves be thought not only integrated with it in one whole but also identical with certain characteristics of it and appearing otherwise by simply being a certain manifestation of it. Of course, until all the characteristics of matter, particularly its atomicity, are explicable in terms of space-time structure, we cannot affirm this last possibility. Signs, however, are not lacking to persuade us that we are on the right track. They are noticeable in connection with the invariant "interval" in space-time which is the absolute of the relative distances and durations.

Sullivan, in his *Aspects of Science* (Second Series) puts the case very well. "From this relation, the interval", he writes, "various complicated mathematical expressions may be built up by purely mathematical analysis. At a certain stage in this process we reach expressions which obey exactly the same equations as density, stress, momentum etc. Now these latter quantities, density and so on, form what a physicist means by a piece of matter. But the mathematical expressions derived from the interval refer to geometrical properties of the continuum—to its *curvature*, for example. What is the meaning of the fact that certain geometrical properties of the four-dimensional continuum and certain physical quantities, characteristic of matter, obey the same equations? The suggestion is that the physical quantities and the geometrical properties are the same thing..."

Their being the same and yet seeming different is explained by Sullivan in the immediately next phrase in terms that are a little doubtful. He states the above suggestion in other words as "that what we call matter is, indeed, only the way in which our minds perceive the existence of these geometrical peculiarities of the four-dimensional continuum." No doubt, the human mind has a good deal of say in the perceptual experience that it has of reality; but the more balanced view would appear to be that the world of matter and of relative space and time is itself an actual manifestation of the four-dimensional continuum and certain aspects of this manifestation are discovered and interpreted by the human mind rather than completely created by it in response to that hidden reality. That reality and this manifestation have both of them the look of a physical counterpart or expression of a Conscious Being at work; so the granting of an "objective" status to the world of matter and of relative space and time does not diminish the primacy of Consciousness and what the human mind does in its perceptual experience is just to get into a particular sort of communication with the ultimate Consciousness. All is play of Consciousness, but a complex multifold play. And part of the play is the actual existence of Sullivan's "matter" and of scientifically measured space and time as differentiations of one and the same quantity, differentiations which seem distinctions as of two quantities so long as an event is studied in reference to a frame in relative motion at a rate very far from that of light but which reveal their true nature as soon as velocities nearing that of light are met with. The world of perceptual experience is very different really from our older pre-Einsteinian picture of it, yet it still remains objective in a certain valid sense so far as the human mind is concerned.

But, objective or no, the main point stands that material properties appear to be basically identical with space-time structure. And we may add that the whole implication of Einstein's repeated effort to create a "unified field theory" taking into its sweep electro-magnetism no less than gravitation and accounting for the particle-nature of matter is this very point. So the curving that the general relativity theory gave to space-time has brought in its train a many-sided accession of strength to the interpreters who feel drawn by the special relativity theory beyond the confines of physics and beyond a materialistic world-view.

(Concluded)

K. D. SETHNA

POEMS

THE MOTHER'S NAME

INEFFABLY sweet is the music of Thy Name,
O Mother with Thy human face of love!
A transforming light Thou bringest from above
Into the Ocean-depths where burns no flame.

When Veilers spread their passion-clouds of gloom,
And Hurters stalk abroad in the deepening night,
The power of Thy Name puts all to flight,
A diamond flash that ends the shapes of doom.

The Mantra of Thy Name is creation's Bird
Of Grace which carries the Four on its brilliant wings,
The Mothers with their mystic gaze on things,
Who know the destined steps and the hidden Word.

Vibrant with Force the Mantra opens to prayer
The door of gold-orbed Thunder's silent lair.

PRITHWI SINGH

FLIGHT

I HAVE launched my boat out in the deepmost sea,
The blurred shore is seen no more;
All around rippling waters dance in glee,
A treasure-horizon looms before.

Sweet from a farness blows a wind-breath tender,
Speaks to the sail heart to heart;
The slow God-dawn unveils supernal grandeur
Creating worlds of celestial art.

With heavenly fires is packed to the brim my day,
Distant stars descend at night,
Shedding their winged lustre-songs on the way
Cloven by my unknown flight.

A brighter moon in its glow takes hold of all...
Over the stilled waves glides on the boat;
No storm I fear...I hear His fire-flute call...
On a sea of ecstasy I am set afloat.

ROBI GUPTA

MOTHER INDIA

DISCOVERY

He came when ignorant of him I slept,
He came and I flew, flew far into the sky.
Time favoured not, evasive destiny kept
Me away. Mind-vision failed and fumbled its pry.

He went, I saw but could not make him stay—
Ah his grace, his speed; I wept and in vain I spilt
My tears, as in the arms of fate I lay—
A wreck and an easy prey to gloom and guilt.

I gazed but around a mist prevailed, a dark
Shrouded my remains. Yet in a core forlorn
Of my faint mass there lurked a deathless spark
Braving time's test and pointing to a morn.

And as I pierced to the depths of my soul's force,
He was I who never had left the streaming life-course.

HAR KRISHAN SINGH

INCONSISTENCIES IN SPIRITUAL LIFE

SPIRITUAL life demands an entire dedication of oneself to the pursuit of union with the Divine. Each thought, each impulse in us has constantly to be reminded that That is the Supreme and not all this that men here adore. Anything therefore that diverts our attention from this central Truth, anything that has the lure of desire and ego in it, is wholly inconsistent with spiritual seeking. Such a wholesale dedication of life implies great patience and perseverance in the path till the goal is reached and we are established in the divine consciousness and divine realisation. But though patience is demanded of us, in practice we demonstrate a pitiful lack of it at almost every step of the journey and are always impatient and in a hurry to go through even the most trifling details of daily life. One has merely to observe one's own inner reactions and the outward conduct of others to feel this spirit of restlessness that is rampant amongst us. For example, in a queue where we are expected to await our turn patiently, look at our hurry and restlessness as if the whole world would crash if we had to wait a few minutes longer. Many often violate the rules of discipline always implied in spiritual life in order to push themselves to the front. Yet if we examine every such case even with the utmost leniency, we shall find that often there is not the slightest justification for such haste and impatience; it is a mechanical habit and nervous weakness which demands a severe check and control rather than indulgence. Habit dies hard and a seeker who is in the meshes of a weak nervous and mechanical habit needs more than average care and vigilance if he has to get rid of his slavery to it. How many of us even concede that such slavery is bad and should be overcome? On the contrary most of us would even seek to justify our conduct—which goes to show that we are not even conscious of our own imperfections and the inconsistency of haste and nervousness with the calm and firmness required in spiritual seeking.

Peace is the one real criterion of progress in the spiritual path. Anything therefore that disturbs us, anything that makes us lose our peace of mind, fear, anger, greed, lust, hatred and jealousy for example, must be regarded as a wrong movement, wrong because it disturbs us, proceeds from a separative consciousness which creates a division in the indivisible unity of the Divine and is contrary to the poise of the soul in all the circumstances of life, good, bad or indifferent. If mental silence can be added to the poise of peace, that will be a capital gain. But that is hard to achieve. So long as desire is there, it is difficult.

if not impossible to establish peace and silence. Desires coming up from the subconscious over which we have ordinarily no control, are a potent cause of disturbance. Most of us are wanting in the vigilance and awareness necessary for the control of the subconscious. So we drift helplessly in the current of nature. Paradoxically enough though humility has been recommended as a highest virtue, the spiritual seeker once he has made a certain progress in some direction, may become disproportionately egoistic, and as a result, arrogant and intransigent. This is mostly the danger with those who have superficially progressed in some works of the outer life but entirely lack a deep and true inner living. A little efficiency in some specialised work is apt to turn the head of the seeker unless he is specially vigilant. True progress, it is needless to mention, brings more and more of humility because the seeker is reminded at every step of the Infinite that he has yet to know and become. Self-effacement is the goal and not crude self-assertion as is the case with many of us at least in the initial stages. By the elimination of our crude and narrow outer self, we enter into the unity and vastness of the universal consciousness which is a real first step towards a spiritual life. If that is not done, then nothing is done in spite of all our tall talk. Nothing but self-deception and a foolish complacency can reconcile us to a spiritual life in which there is no realisation of the Spirit.

When the gods, it is said, can be won over by flattery, what to speak of frail humanity? Love of flattery seems to be ingrained in human nature. Our sense of vanity is satisfied when some one flatters us. In return we are ready to forego truth and justice for the sake of our minion. Many an undeserving one is thus patronised by the spiritual seeker out of this common frailty, this love of flattery. This is greatly to be deplored. Are we not expected to be above all prejudices and take a purely impersonal view of everything? 'Rightly to be great is not to stir without great ambition but greatly to find quarrel in a starw when honour is at stake'. Whatever may be the justification for such an attitude in the worldly life, in the spiritual life it is altogether out of order. 'Samanindastu-tuirmauni'—equal-minded in praise and blame and silent—this is the attitude laid down by the Gita for the spiritual seeker. Any violation of this injunction and bringing in of our ego and personality to the fore is contradictory of spiritual discipline. Yet how many of us rise above these petty personal considerations? We feel elated by flattery and depressed by censure, have partiality for the flatterer and look askance at the critic however right and just his criticisms may be. This love of flattery and intolerance of censure are some of the weaknesses we have to overcome in spiritual life.

Another great fault of the seeker is his love of ostentation. Needless to say this proceeds from a sense of superiority and is justly condemned as unworthy

of any true spiritual seeker. We parade whatever trifling of capacity, power, position and authority we command and fling that at the face of our less privileged brother. Empty vessels sound much—this is as true in spiritual life as in ordinary life. The man of spiritual experience and realisation is always quiet. The man who possesses little or no experience is a braggart. Some are so artificial and rigid that they have a fixed and mechanical way of speaking, sitting and walking. They allow themselves to grow into a peculiar pattern doing everything in a set and regulated manner and developing many other artificialities of speech and conduct, preferences and exclusions, love and attachment which are wholly unwarranted in spiritual life. Plasticity is the watch-word of spiritual life and rigidity is just its reverse. All artificialities and conventions have to be thrown out if one is to live freely and spontaneously a healthy spiritual existence.

There is a class of people all over the world who make use of spiritual life as a cover for the fulfilment of their desires and ambitions. There is the rajasic type—those who are over-zealous in rendering their service to the Divine. These people come into conflict with every one about them and create a chaos and disorder by too much of zeal; even as there is the other type of tamasic people who neglect their work and squander away the resources in labour and material that the Divine places at their disposal. There is a tendency in the rajasic type to develop into petty tyrants, and as tyranny and cowardice are only the obverse and reverse sides of the same picture, both these elements are present in them. Name, fame, clinging to power, position and authority become a sort of unholy obsession with them, often leading them into the path of untruth.

To lead a truly spiritual life is a difficult thing, much more difficult than we can even conceive. It implies a constant struggle against the lower nature made up of lust, anger, greed, hatred, jealousy, fear, and falsehood; till the higher manifests itself. Till we dissolve our petty ego and little personality and reach a certain impersonal consciousness from where we can look at men, events and things with a complete detachment, there cannot be even a beginning of the spiritual life.

JIBENDRA

BOOKS IN THE BALANCE

The Integral Yoga of Sri Aurobindo Part 2 by *Rishabh Chand*. Publishers: Sri Aurobindo Ashram Pondicherry. Pp. 278 and a frontispiece of Sri Aurobindo. Price Rs. 4:

Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry, has produced a sizeable crop of writers, poets and artists and Rishabh Chand, one of the old disciples of Sri Aurobindo, has sprung into prominence during recent years as an exponent of his Yoga and philosophy. His spiritual writings are the rich fruit of full twenty years spent in silent and deep sadhana and now the waters of silence are flowing out in quickening streams.

Here is the promised second part completing the book in whose first part the author set out to give a general outline of the different aspects of Sri Aurobindo's Yoga. The complexity of this Yoga stems from the fact that for the first time the unparalleled attempt is made to grapple with the whole complex nature of man and the universe he inhabits and aim is to comb every nook and corner of our being so that the Augean Stables are cleansed with unsparing thoroughness. The work is on the face of it superhuman in its magnitude and the meticulous labour it demands. But we need not blench from it; for, the power that will undertake it is the supramental Truth-consciousness, hinted as the Higher Nature in the Gita, or in a more intimate way the Divine Mother. Hence, as the author wrote in the preface to the first part: "Its method is an integral surrender to the Mother, the Consciousness-Force of the Divine, and the crown of its achievement the manifestation of God in a transfigured humanity."

In the second part the author leads us into the deeper mysteries of Yoga and expects the reader who has surveyed the terrain he has to trek, its deep crevasses, abrupt and steep slopes and ascents. He should now brace himself up to face the avalanches and hailstorms that beset the path. He has to gird his loins and strike out to conquer the Everest of the Spiritual realms.

The whole spiritual metaphysics of Sri Aurobindo pivots on his discovery of the Supermind's divine nature behind our present human nature comprising the physical, vital and the mental strata of our being. In the absence of this discovery as the author says, "the passive status of the liberated soul, as in the Sankhya, or its traceless merger in the eternal Immutable, as in the later Vedanta, would be the crowning achievement of all spiritual endeavour."

It is this supernature which invests our outer world of ignorance and darkness with a significance and acts as the loadstar of our aspiration. This supernature by its alchemic touch can transform into gold the lead of our present nature. And it is no mere possibility but the inevitable destiny of the race. Hence, says the author, "to cast away Nature because, in its present formulation, it is ignorant and discordant, is to cast away altogether the possibilities of God's manifestation in life."

The first chapter sets out to give a picture of the higher nature with all its salient features and dynamic powers. It is the "self-nature of the Divine," and is the creatrix of the universe. "In supernature there is no duality of *puruṣa* and *prakṛti*—they are one. Consciousness and Force, Knowledge and Will, status and dynamism form the warp and woof of the same infinite and indivisible existence." The supramental consciousness being omniscient and omnipotent, "there is nothing capricious or arbitrary in its action." In one sentence the author is able to crystallise the mode of its self-deployment: "An unfailing Light guides the steps of an unfaltering Force."

A very significant feature of the working of the supernature on our present terrestrial nature will be that it will not be confined to some stray individuals but will transform the "collective-lower nature of the mental man."

The next chapter deals with the most difficult problem of the 'Purification of Nature.' Difficult, because unless the bosom is cleansed of that perilous stuff which prevents the higher things from being planted here there is no secure progress. While in other Yogas purification means the freedom of the soul from the clutches of the Nature, in the Integral Yoga the Nature and the soul alike have to be lifted aloft and transmuted. Therefore the Gordian knot has not to be cut but loosened and straightened. This purification cannot be conducted by the mental consciousness which is so superficial that it knows nothing of the subliminal and subconscious layers of our being and is even a mere plaything in their hands. Only the torchlight of the psychic being can penetrate those dark chambers and light them up and then dissolve the serried mass of darkness by bringing the power of the higher consciousness to work on them. Here in one sentence of rare felicity the author describes the nature of the psychic: "When one fixes one's gaze on the immaculate psychic, and contemplates its serene, smiling radiance, its intense, flaming love for the Divine, its infinite tenderness and sweetness, its boundless patience and forbearance with the evils of earthly life, its consciousness of unity with all beings and things, one finds, deep in oneself, an iron will to reproduce all that glory in the parts of one's nature." The author shows how this method is far more efficacious, healthy, thorough and integrating than the prevalent psychological methods such as psycho-analysis and its brood.

“Detachment, willed co-operation and surrender are the three strands of the initial basis of purification in the Integral Yoga.”

The next chapter deals with the purification of that “immense sea of amorphous or half-formed elements” called Chitta in Sanskrit. Integral transformation calls for integral purification, so the author takes up each part turn by turn and shows the way to tackle it—the part that is the breeding place for desires and cravings of all sorts, the emotional nature and even the physical consciousness.

The whole meaning of the twin processes of ascent and descent in this Yoga are succinctly bodied forth in this key-sentence: “Man’s pilgrimage is from untruth to truth, from darkness to Light and from mortality to immortality; or, ... from Matter to Spirit. But his ascent is both a sublimation and an integration, so that when man reaches the glories of his spiritual existence, he does not necessarily die to his mental and material life, but can bring those glories down into his earthly nature and achieve a dynamic harmony of divine existence.”

After the purification of the whole nature we come to the three great strands of the Yoga: viz., action or works, love and knowledge. The yoga of Divine Works is in the line of the Gita’s gospel of action done as a dedication and sacrifice to the Divine without any motive of personal desire behind it. This springs from Love of the Divine who is the Lord of the Sacrifice and who, as the Mother, is constantly acting and driving the universe to its ultimate Destiny. And this action culminates in an integral knowledge of the Divine and an integral union. The sadhaka has to open himself to the Knowledge and power of the Mother and he will find new faculties developing in him and bringing skill in his works. The very act of offering an action to the Mother brings down Her Grace that floods the being with Ananda and power. “To open thus to the divine guidance at every step of his work and be open enough to receive it when it comes is to qualify for being an inspired instrument of God.”

Dedicated works, divine love, and the Spiritual Gnosis pave the way for integral liberation which leads to integral transformation and then to integral perfection. The chapters on the Integral Transformation throw a flood of light on this new feature of Sri Aurobindo’s Yoga. The author elaborates the meaning of Transformation, its rationale, the prerequisite conditions and the three steps viz., the psychic transformation, the opening and ascent to the higher spiritual planes and then the culminating Supramental transformation.

The chapter on the Integral Perfection commences with the heightening of the capacities of the instruments and then fully describes (a) the fourfold perfection of the body and (b) the fourfold perfection of the heart and the Buddhi, paving the way for the Supramental perfection.

The last chapter, ‘The Hour of God’ opens our gaze to the suitability of the

present time when epoch-making changes are taking place and His ory has put on seven-league boots. I am reminded of Wordsworth's

Bliss was it in that dawn to be alive
But to be young was very heaven...

It is an excellent book for all those who aspire for a higher life and see the solution of our problems in the coming of a new era of spiritual life.

R. N. KHANNA

Sri Aurobindo Circle, Eleventh Number, Journal of Sri Aurobindo Study Society Bombay, 1955. Price Rs. 7 for paper and Rs. 8:8 for cloth-bound.

This is the eleventh year of the publication of this annual and those who are interested in the literature inspired by Sri Aurobindo's spiritual message will welcome the sumptuous fare that each issue provides. The present number is very beautifully brought out with two pictures of the Mother in her full majesty and spiritual grandeur. Then there is a facsimile of a pencil-sketch drawn by Sri Aurobindo for the guidance of a sadhak.

The annual sets out with twenty most illuminating letters of Sri Aurobindo on Buddha and Buddhism, throwing light on that spiritual giant as an Avatar and his contribution to the spiritual evolution of humanity. Sri Aurobindo deals with all the aspects and later developments of Buddhism from the point of view of their spiritual content and their metaphysical standpoint. The Nirvana experience is thus described in one of these letters: "Mind is silent, thought has ceased,—desires, passions, vital movements there are none. There is consciousness but only a formless elemental consciousness without limits. The body moves and acts, but the sense of the body is not there. Sometimes there is only the consciousness of pure existence, sometimes only pure consciousness, sometimes all that exists is only a ceaseless limitless Ananda."

Then there are eight letters on Scientists, Psychologists and supraphysical phenomena. We must not apply scientific tests to things spiritual. Says Sri Aurobindo, "The physical scientists have their own field with its own instruments and standards. To apply the same tests to phenomena of a different kind is as foolish as to apply physical tests to spiritual truth. One can't dissect God or see the soul under a microscope." Then there are some very significant letters on Bergson's philosophy in general and his concept of "intuition". Then a number of letters dealing with these subjects: Human ideas of Space and Time, the Mother's view of sleep—how if one can enter in the restful repose of higher consciousness one can be quite refreshed. Letters on:

The Aim of Life, Speaking the Truth, Intellectual and Spiritual Teaching, Inferiority, Superiority and Self-Respect, War in World History, Atlantis.

There are two whole chapters from *The Synthesis of Yoga*, viz. Purification—Intelligence and Will, and The Liberation of the Spirit. "The object of the purification of the Buddhi," according to Sri Aurobindo, is "to arrive at the possession of our own truth of self-being, but also at the possession of the highest of our being in Nature. For that purpose we must first purify the buddhi of all that makes it subject to the sense mind and, that once done, purify it from its own limitations and convert its inferior mental intelligence and will into the greater action of a spiritual will and knowledge."

Then there are some apophthegms by the Mother worthy of being written in letters of gold. For instance she says: "Be courageous and do not think so much of yourself. It is because you make your little ego the centre of your preoccupation that you are sad and unsatisfied." Again, "To forget oneself is the great remedy for all ills." About concentration she says: "Concentration does not mean meditation; on the contrary, concentration is a state which one should realise in a continuous way whatever may be the external activity. By concentration I mean that all energies, all will, all aspirations should be turned only to the Divine and His integral realisation in our consciousness." Another very helpful remark is: "The best thing is to consider oneself neither great nor small, neither very important nor insignificant, because we are nothing by ourselves. We must want to be only what the Divine Will wants us to be." A further attraction is The Mother's Talks dealing with such questions as getting proud and satisfied and thus spoiling the spiritual achievement, or the conditions for a descent of faith, and the value of religious exercises such as Japa.

M.P. Pandit who is well-known for his splendid work on the mystic interpretation of the Vedas has contributed a very lucid article on the Isha Upanishad. The space of a brief review does not permit me to write anything about the other very inspired articles especially A.B. Purani's research in the significance of the key-word Ritam in the Veda and Rev. E.F.F. Hill's subtle sensitive analysis of Sri Aurobindo's satisfying view of "The Divine in His strength" as compared to the current religious notions of this problem in the West.

Another fascinating feature of the journal is its section containing spiritual poems of high poetic excellence by such poets as K.D. Sethna, Romen, and Norman Dowsett. And finally, in connection with poetry, we must commend Nathaniel Pearson's article on Sri Aurobindo's Quantitative Metre.

We hope this publication will have a wide circulation and awaken in people a desire to know more about the work done at the Pondicherry Ashram.

R. N. KHANNA

Students' Section

THE MOTHER'S TALKS

To the Children of the Ashram

THE MIND'S BAZAR

You can't imagine what a bazar there is in the head. It is something terrible. If you look truly objectively at what passes there you will be shocked. You have to put it in order, see into it clearly and arrange, observe that two contradictory ideas do not run together on parallel lines.

I know a considerable number of persons who shelter in their head contrary ideas, not at all synthesised—there is no question of synthesis here—but cohabiting like two brothers engaged in eternal quarrels and contradictions, that is to say, the two ideas cannot live together, unless you lift them up and reconcile and unify in a higher and wider view; but that means work of a superior kind. People often do not even perceive that they are contradicting themselves with their conflicting ideas, they are not disturbed in any way. If I should give you examples—they are innumerable—you would laugh at the ridiculousness of incompatible ideas associating together.

I propose to give you a task. You have ideas on things. You must surely have ideas on the world, life, the why of existence and the whence and the whither, wherefore we are here, our present occupation, our future realisation etc, etc. Now try to put all these ideas in front of you and then arrange them. Will you find it easy? Surely it will amuse you and you will discover amazing things. First of all, the very work itself of exposition, that is to say, simply placing the ideas side by side in front of you, all the ideas that you have on a given subject, as if you were writing out a composition given in your class, will bring to you funny revelations. If you had not already the habit of holding to a central idea, a central immutable truth, if that were possible, around which you arranged all the collateral ideas, organised them in a logical order, if, I say, you did not do anything like that before, you would find yourself, if not in a sad, at least in a funny situation. You can't imagine how many contradictory

thoughts you are thinking in the course of an hour without the least surprise! For example, take this subject: "what is the goal towards which life is moving?" or "why do men take birth only to die?"—take a subject a little general and even somewhat abstract like this and not the problem of why football today and not basket-ball—things can be easily explained away there—and then try to line up all your ideas on the matter; you will see how queer the affair is.

Q. How to distinguish between an idea that is one's own and an idea coming from elsewhere (a book or a person)?

A: There is nothing like an idea belonging to oneself and an idea belonging to others. No one has an idea exclusively his own. There is an immensity out of which one can draw according to one's personal affinity. Ideas are a collective possession, a joint property. Only there are different stages. There is the most common or commonplace stage where all of us have our brain sunk in a crowded mass of impersonal notions. It is the stage of Mr. Everybody. The next stage is a little higher, that of thinkers, as they are called. There are other stages further up, many others, some beyond the domain of words, others still within the domain of ideas. Those who can mount sufficiently high are able to catch something that looks like light and bring it down with its packet of ideas or its bundle of thoughts. An idea brought down from a higher region organises itself, crystallises itself into a variety of thoughts that are capable of expressing the idea in different ways. Then, if you are a writer, a poet or an artist and bring it further down into more concrete forms, then you can have all kinds of expressions, infinite ways of presenting a single idea, a single small idea perhaps, but coming from a great height. If you can do that, you know also how to distinguish between the pure idea and the manner of expressing it. If you are unable to do it by yourself, you can take the help of others, you can learn from persons and books. You can, for example, note how one particular idea has been given so many different forms by different poets. There is the pure or essential idea, then there is the typical or generic idea and then the many formulations. You can exercise your mind in this way, teach it suppleness, subtlety, strength and other virtues.

In fact, if you wish to be truly intelligent, you must learn a bit of mental gymnastics, even as you have to do physical gymnastics if you wish to have a strong capable body. People who have never done mental gymnastics have a small elementary brain; all their life they think like children. Mental exercise means that you must know how to do it and do it seriously. First of all, it means that you must not have fixed convictions, namely, that this idea is right and that one is wrong, this formulation is correct, the other one is inexact or that this religion is true, the other is false and so on. If you go on in that train you become very soon stupid, a blockhead. What you have to do, say, in the matter

THE MOTHER'S TALKS

of religion, is to take up all the religions one by one and see how all have expressed the same human aspiration for the Absolute of some kind. You can compare and contrast, understand, weigh and balance, the game will be extremely interesting. Now, when you have mastered all the ideas, seized all the modes of expression, you can try to go beyond, look at them and smile at the eternal discussions mankind indulges in. You are then master of your mind and no longer subject to what seems to be the commonest habit of mankind—getting into a fury simply because someone does not happen to think like you.

16-3-1955

SPIRITS IN TREES

Q. You told us the other day that there are spirits who remain bound to trees. How are they to get free?

A. Why should they get free?

Q. You told us how the spirits in the trees got freed when someone was kind to them and said prayers on their behalf.

A. Yes, but that was in the story. It was a Christian legend and put in that way to illustrate a lesson. It was to show that if you are wicked you suffer even after death, that it is a virtuous life that saves you from misery. In reality, however, there is no question here of sin and punishment; it is not that spirits get attached to trees in order to be punished. When a person dies, his vital being leaves the body and goes out; but it finds itself in unfamiliar and inhospitable surroundings, especially if there is no one, none among his friends and relatives upon earth, to help him in the proper way, to guide or protect him in the new country where there are hostile beings to harm. In such a situation a tree is often a very ready shelter, a big old tree with friendly branches spread out, possessing a strong vitality. It is the sap, the element of water coursing in the substance of the tree, that is to say, the support of its life-power, to which the vital being of the dead man is drawn as its physical support and shelter. There is no question of forced imprisonment and a desire to be freed.

Q. Are they not harmful, these spirits?

A. In what way? Usually they do not seem to be so.

Q. But we hear stories of people who are possessed by them and troubled and tortured.

A. Those are of a different kind. They are beings belonging to the vital world and are hostile forces. Here we were speaking of the remnants of the vital being of a dead man. But even in cases of possession by hostile forces or beings, the real truth is most often of another kind. Usually these beings or spirits, as

they are called, are nothing more than creations of men. That is to say, it is fear that produces them; it is a mere mental formation which is taken to be a reality. And the greater the fear, the more concrete and effective the formation appears to be. I have had to deal with hundreds of such cases and I have found that there are very few which contain anything more than imagination. Some time ago, I was told of a tree nearby that was the haunt of a ghost. Our milkmen were afraid of the ghost and had seen it! I sent Amrita to burn some incense there and go round the tree a few times and tell the people it was gone. Well, it was indeed gone; for it was not a very substantial being. As I said, most of the spirits are the creations of our fear.

Q. How long do spirits of dead people live in their trees?

A. That depends. There are entities that stay or live only for a short time; there are others that have a stronger formation and may stay on in their shelter for a thousand years, if the trees live to a thousand years.

Q. Do such spirits go out of animals also and possess trees?

A. Not likely. A certain growth and organisation of the vital being is necessary to be able to persist after death. The vital being of an animal is too unformed and fluid, too bound to the body to continue as an independent entity. When an animal dies its vitality almost immediately disintegrates and merges into the general forces of Nature. It is only in man where there is a mental being to organise the vitality into some sort of an individualised form that the persistence of that form is possible after the dissolution of the body.

6-5-1955

NOLINI KANTA GUPTA

MY BOYHOOD UNDER SRI AUROBINDO

ART

SELF: What is the difference between the artistic look and the vital look?

SRI AUROBINDO: In the artistic look there is only the perception of beauty and the joy of it because it exists and one has seen and felt it. There is no desire to possess or enjoy in the vital way. (4-8-1933)

The artistic way of seeing is better than the vital. (5-8-1933)

SELF: When I see certain faces, I like to look at them and, though ordinarily one may expect a wrong vital movement, I feel no such movement. Is such a thing possible?

SRI AUROBINDO: One can have a preference or appreciation of a face or a body for aesthetic or other reasons without its being sexual—but when it is from a man to a woman the sex can come in at any moment unless one is master of one's own consciousness. (23-12-1933)

SELF: Is it not true that Beauty and Truth are always one—wherever there is Beauty there is Truth too?

SRI AUROBINDO: In beauty there is the truth of beauty—What do you mean by Truth? There are truths of various kinds and they are not all beautiful. (10-9-1933)

SELF: When the poets, artists or musicians create something original, is it by going beyond the human consciousness?

SRI AUROBINDO: No. They remain in the human consciousness, but they open to something in the larger mind or larger vital (worlds of Thought and Vision, worlds of beauty) and become a medium for the expression of things that are. (13-1-1936)

MOTHER INDIA

THE TRUE OBJECT OF ASKING QUESTIONS

SELF: I realise that your answering my questions or your not answering them depends on what you know to be a help to my sadhana. I will try not to let the vital get upset when there is no answer.

SRI AUROBINDO: That is good. It is often better to wait for experience and then ask because to form mental notions beforehand does not help, it becomes an obstacle to getting the real thing—you either remain with the idea only or you get something limited by the idea you have formed, not the force and full action of the power. (22-6-1933)

SELF: Sometimes I feel that just because I have not directly asked a question after submitting an account of experiences, I do not get Mother's reply though the mind may be feeling its necessity.

SRI AUROBINDO: The object of the writing should be not to get replies, but to put what passes in you before the Mother and get help—not merely mental, but spiritual and psychic.

SOME GENERAL PROBLEMS OF SADHANA

SELF: You have said: "There can be no perfect understanding unless you are in union with the *unexpressed mind*." What is this mind and how is one to come into contact with it?

SRI AUROBINDO: I don't know the context. But it can only mean that only one part of the mind expresses itself, the rest remains unexpressed behind—it is that unexpressed part with which you have to get into union. (30-9-1933)

SELF: In what way are our mental activities divided from the Truth and are a deformation of the divine Knowledge?

SRI AUROBINDO: They work for themselves, not for the Divine, and they follow their own ignorant light and cling to it instead of opening to the Divine Knowledge. (11-12-1933)

SELF: What are the conditions in the lower vital and physical for the higher consciousness to begin action?

SRI AUROBINDO: There must be the will to purity, the will of sadhana, some capacity for introspection and experience. (28-12-1933)

SELF: How is it that the good condition of consciousness so often disappears?

SRI AUROBINDO: There is no stability in the early stages. Conditions come and go. You have to persevere till you get a stable basis. (13-7-1933)

SELF: Why and how do the small forces and beings of the vital plane come in just at the right time to interfere with one's sadhana?

SRI AUROBINDO: They act at all times when they see anything in the mind, vital or body off its guard. (11-6-35)

SELF: What makes the physical so weak that it can't do without the vital's help?

SRI AUROBINDO: The physical is not weak, it is inert, because inertia is its principle—it is meant to be an instrument. (22-10-1933)

SELF: Does rejection of a physical illness mean taking no notice of it?

SRI AUROBINDO: No. It means rejection just as you reject a bad state of the vital. (22-10-1933)

SELF: What happens with the force and energy of a thought or impulse rejected by a sadhaka?

SRI AUROBINDO: A force returned goes back necessarily into the universal plane—at most its form gets abolished but the energy returns there. (27-12-1933)

SELF: It is now becoming possible to deal with certain suggestions as foreign and false to my nature. But they have not stopped coming.

SRI AUROBINDO: That is all right. Suggestions can always come—the thing is to be able not to accept or have anything to do with them. (28-12-1933)

SELF: When everything comes really from universal Nature, why are impulses felt as if they arose in one's own self?

SRI AUROBINDO: Because people are shut up in their personal consciousness—they see the results, that is the sensations in themselves but they do not see the process and the source—it is so all through human life. (15-11-1933)

MOTHER INDIA

SELF: Is there not some other method of transformation than the detailed and laborious one we have to follow?

SRI AUROBINDO: There is no short cut to transformation. Things can be done more or less quickly, but they must be done. (4-8-1933)

The Yoga cannot be done in a minute. Some essential changes are made rapidly but even these have to be worked out and confirmed in the detail of action. What you speak of only the Supramental could do if it acted directly or some force fully supported by the Supramental, but that occurs rarely. (5-6-1933)

SELF: If one can't do one's work well at a certain time and place, is it not better to change the conditions?

SRI AUROBINDO: It is better to face and overcome the difficulty than to run away from it. (28-6-1933)

SELF: Should faithfulness extend to every detail of one's life?

SRI AUROBINDO: If you are not faithful in details, in what will you be faithful? (19-6-1933)

SELF: To whom is our gratitude due for the difficulties overcome, our general progress and all our well-being?

SRI AUROBINDO: Gratitude is due to the Divine only from the sadhaka. (22-3-1933)

NAGIN DOSHI

POEMS

HIS EYES OF DIAMOND PEACE

To feed the brooding spans with vision-flame
Two eyes of diamond Peace.
Their moon-gold Love descends in the human heart
Our mortal life to seize

And change our sombre fate and venomed hours,
Our sorrow's songs outcast.
No more shall rule the ancient heavy veil,
Our self's forgotten vast.

Uncovered is the earth's aspiring soul.
Two Eyes; only two Eyes!...
The storm-winged tragedy of ignorance stark
Salutes their immortal Rise.

CHINMOY

A DREAM

A dream came flying with the stars—
I sat still by the fading sea
Alone with dusk and silence and
Thy sweet Presence pervading me.

The heavens became a paler grey,
Paler and softer blew the wind
Among the leaves of the slender palms
And through the stooping tamarind.

The sea became a deeper blue
With starlights glowing on the waves
That roll above the abysmal grotts
Where the imprisoned Tempest raves.

My heart widened to a boundless joy
That floats with winds and seas and skies
And felt the eternal Beauty's kiss
Dropping gently from Paradise.

A dream came from beyond the stars
While I sat musing by the sea
Alone with the dusky hush of mind
And Thy secret Presence wrapping me.

RANAJIT

POEMS

A CHILD'S PRAYER

I know Thou art
Within each heart
As a gentle lake asleep
On the obscure bed
Below the shed
Of a rocky bleakish steep.

But shall not Thy
Blue Spirit-sky
Refuse the torpor-cloud
And Thy sweet face
Haloed in Grace
Out-flame there as the proud

And ruthless sun?
O mighty One,
Now hurl Thy luminous lance;
Dispel the night,
Lead us to Light:
Thy victory enhance!

My limbs aspire
For the argent Fire
That shatters bonds of life
And lifts all men
Towards the reign
Of Love that knows no grief.

I pray to Thee
My tears may be
Drops of a wondrous rain
That shall at last
Flow to Thy Vast,
Be merged and then again

Fall fresh on earth
To give soul-birth
To a tiny crimson rose
That loves but Thee,
With Thy ecstasy
Kept in her bosom close!

PRITHWINDRA

NEW ROADS

BOOK IV

THE TRAVELLER

I

OUT of the west a traveller came
To India seeking wealth or fame
And thought that he could even show
These people things they did not know.
But he, on arriving in these lands
Of ancient culture where the sands
Of time run slow, saw that the flow
Of life, while seeking yet to grow,
Was tempered by a golden Sun—
And moon and stars for everyone
Were symbols of a cosmic Law
Where man is humble still before
The gods, and where the mood of life
Is not so much a constant strife
As a seeking for a wider view,
A longing for a state more true
Than pain and pleasure, good or bad,
The rich, the poor, the happy, the sad—
A state of consciousness where trod
The ancient warrior-souls of God.
He saw the slowly moving streams.
Of oxen and the bullock teams
That pull the loads along the way
Throughout the burning heat of day;
He stood and gazed and wondered why
The Indian farmer could not buy
A modern truck to take his grain
More speedily to meet the train—

NEW ROADS

And then he overheard one say:
"Tomorrow will do, or some other day,
I'm not in a hurry to borrow or lend
Or rush towards my journey's end."
And on these words he pondered and wondered
And remembered his home where the traffic thundered
All day and all night in an endless fright
Of sight and sound—where the magic light
Of the moon was seen, best on the screen—
And peace was something that might have been—
Where life was a scramble and often a tangle
Of hopes and dreams, for the price of a bangle
Sold in the market square of Chance
And Circumstance, to the modern dance
Of shuffle and bustle, hurry and stumble,
Of business manoeuvre and social grumble.
"Come what may we're buried tomorrow,
Weep and you are left alone with your sorrow."
Oh what a nightmare drunk with the wine
Of earth forgetful of the Divine!
He shuddered away from the sight in the mind
And Time and Space turned a page to find
The Present there before his eyes;
He stood beneath a calm of azure skies.
All his reading and thinking of eastern ways
That had found a place in his college days
Was as naught before this living scene,
And learning might just not have been.
For here was a learning of the soul
And a knowledge of God which included the whole
Vast range of human consciousness,
Of which the mind could only guess.
Here was an atmosphere—a Peace
Wherein man found a sure increase
Of faith, without expectancy—
A faith which led to ecstasy
Of soul, known rare in other lands
Where modern education stands
The summum bonum of our age
To light some future heritage;

MOTHER INDIA

Where science is the only god,
And life was, when the heroes trod
The fields of war—gave their last breath
Into the waiting arms of uncertain death.
But here was peace, a chance to live
For the joy of the soul, if one learnt to give
Oneself to the whole of divine Endeavour;
If one felt and saw and was ready to sever
The bonds that held and fettered one fast
To the age-old habits and laws of the past.
If one wanted enough, at the moment of seeing,
The Truth of the soul in the depths of the being.
If one wanted Truth and Truth alone
Then here it was! poised on a throne
Of aspiring, carved from a Vedic dawn,
Silent, waiting to be born.

II

O God! what mockery to have thought
That in this land he could have taught
Anything more profound than say
How many minutes make a day.
Here, where the eye of a beggar child
Is not of a savage, or something wild,
But has beneath each dusky lid
The Light of an ancient culture hid,
And the wisdom of a higher Law—
Like waves that wash some inner shore
Of bliss—a grace, a harmony,
Yet strange to western hedony.
Here in the early morning light
When the sun was yet low in his upward flight,
When the cool caress of a freshening breeze
Blows through the sleeping jasmine trees,
And workers have started an hour before dawn
In planting the paddy or reaping the corn.
But quiet they work and slowly they toil
And mostly a poverty stares from the soil

NEW ROADS

That they till—and from sun-baked plain to hill
A million voices rise to fill
The skies above—the soul is awake!
Though millions die and the rains do not break
Here is labour and love of a human kind
But always something more behind—
It is not religion at its best,
Or the moral idealism of the west
Wrapped in an eastern garb or cloak
Or taught by the priest or even spoke
By the Pope—Oh no! it is not of men!
But of God and a diviner ken.
Ah here is a question that God may ask
The missionary in his task.
Non-violence is what Gandhi heeded
But non-interference is far more needed.
As a first ideal for world-understanding
To widen thought and help the expanding
Consciousness of man to flow
Freely from land to land and grow
Into something more divine
Than what men call *your* creed or *mine*.
The traveller sat down on a stone
And felt now utterly alone—
As one completely at a loss,
Who clearly sees where he must cross
Yet knows not the true way to aspire
To what is now his one desire.
And to himself he quietly said:
“That which was, is dying or dead.
There is no soul left in religions—
It flew from the temple with the pigeons
Which Christ drove out—and from that day
Still man has tried to bribe and pay
His way to God or Liberty
On the wings of a vain hypocrisy.
The parson may preach but the spirit has flown
Back to the Truth of its heavenly throne.
We must live the Word of Christ and see
Where lies the Truth and sincerity;

MOTHER INDIA

Where, in this modern World of Mind
The soul has a living chance to find
A place to grow, unhampered by
The living dead—the grim mortality
Of a world which worships gold as God—
But here, humanity has trod
These roads before—this song was sung
By heroes who had garlands hung
Around their necks for victory
In some past Roman holiday.”

NORMAN DOWSETT

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