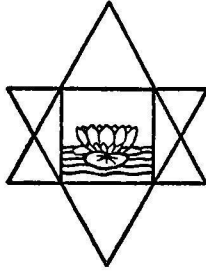


MOTHER INDIA

SEPTEMBER, 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. 8

"Great is Truth and it shall prevail"

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CORRESPONDENCE WITH SRI AUROBINDO

ON HUMAN LIFE

SRI AUROBINDO: It is fundamentally true for most people that the pleasure of life, of existence in itself, predominates over the troubles of life; otherwise most people would want to die whereas the fact is that everybody wants to live—and if you proposed to them an easy means of eternal extinction they would decline without thanks. That is what X is saying and it is undeniable. It is also true that this comes from the Ananda of existence which is behind everything and is reflected in the instinctive pleasure of existence. Naturally, this instinctive essential pleasure is not the Ananda,—it is only a pale and dim reflection of it in an inferior life-consciousness—but it is enough for its purpose. I have said that myself somewhere and I do not see anything absurd or excessive in the statement.

MYSELF: This is how one sees things from the cosmic consciousness, I suppose.

SRI AUROBINDO: Not at all. There are plenty of people, not endowed with the cosmic consciousness who have said and written the same thing. It is no new theory or statement.

MYSELF: In the face of what we see in the world today, it is not easy to accept X's view-point. Just look at India, with its famines and starvation and unemployment! In spite of this, how can it be said that the Ananda of this bare existence surpasses all suffering?

SRI AUROBINDO: All that is only a feature of the present time when everything is out of order. One can't argue from that and speak as if it were the normal existence of the human race. Even with all this trouble and disorder¹ are all these human beings feeling so miserable as you say? They have so much to vex and trouble them, yet they go on chatting, laughing, enjoying what they can. Why?

Against the second part of the question Sri Aurobindo wrote in the margin:

For most people it does. All are not men of sorrows like yourself or fallen

¹ Conjectural reading—Compiler.

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into the Byronic vein. Some of course have so miserable an existence that it stifles the innate pleasure of life—but these are after all a small minority.

MYSELF: But you have yourself written in *The Riddle of this World* that this is an unideal and unsatisfactory world strongly marked with the stāmp of inadequacy, suffering and evil.

SRI AUROBINDO: That is when you look at what the world ought to be and lay stress on what it should be. The idealists' question is why should there be pain at all even if it is outweighed by the fundamental pleasure of existence? The real crux is why should inadequacy, limit and suffering come across this natural pleasure of life? It does not mean that life is essentially miserable in its very nature.

If anyone is conscious of the Mother's presence, he does not make a big case of his troubles.¹ Even if one is not, yet those who have faith or are not touched by your Man of Sorrows are not making the row you speak of. Nobody *has* to make a big case. People do it because they are ignorant and unconscious.

NIRODBARAN

¹ In the daily report of our sadhana we used to send Mother and Sri Aurobindo.

—Compiler.

ADVICE REGARDING DIFFICULTIES

(From Sri Aurobindo's Unpublished Letters)

I-2-35 to 6--3-35

Q: Today I could control for a while the lower forces that were bothering me, but later on they prevailed over me.

SRI AUROBINDO: It is the nature of the sadhana. The forces of the Ignorance are a perversion of the earth-nature and the adverse Powers make use of them. They do not give up their control of men without a struggle.

*

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The one thing wrong would be to allow yourself to be overcome by them. If you remain steady in yourself, you can repel the attack or else it will exhaust itself and pass. In such circumstances you have to be like a cliff attacked by a stormy sea but never submerged by it.

*

*

Q: What is it that exposes me so often to the attacks of the forces of dissatisfaction and desire?

It is the weakness in the vital which enables them to keep up their attack. Instead of allowing the weakness revive your will and aspiration and love and let them throw out this egoistic darkness.

*

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Also allow no demand of the human vital to rise up in clamour of egoistic revolt or if one rises see that you or no part of you identify yourself with it.

*

*

Q: Is this negative condition a real problem in our sadhana?

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SRI AUROBINDO: The negative condition should not alarm, if it is only negative, not accompanied with a disturbance. Some perseverance¹ is all that is needed to get rid of it.

It is the physical inertia that is the basis of the trouble. The inertia gives room and power for the hostile forces to act.

Q: What part of my being responds to the difficulty?

SRI AUROBINDO: As I have written there must be something in your consciousness (probably the vital physical) in which these things can still find a response, otherwise they could be felt but they would not stop all sadhana.

The thing you can do is not to remain passive, to refuse to identify any part of your being with these things and to reject it all with decision and force and to allow constantly the Mother's Power.

Keep your faith, refuse the suggestions, use your own will, call in the Mother's Power.

*

*

Q: In a dream I saw a boy running after me. Thrice I caught him and threw him down but he continued to follow me.

SRI AUROBINDO: The boy obviously represents some lower force and it is some weakness in the being (indicated by the running away) that allows him to trouble you.

*

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The running away is the symbol of the inertia in part of the being which allows the forces to invade, drawing back from them and losing ground instead of facing and destroying them.

*

*

Q: How is it that, in spite of remaining aloof from people, one is still open to the ordinary ignorant forces of Nature?

SRI AUROBINDO: One is always open so long as there is not the final change. If things do not come in it is because the consciousness is vigilant or the psychic in front; but the least want of vigilance or relaxation can allow something to enter.

¹ or "persistence"—*Compiler*.

ADVICE REGARDING DIFFICULTIES

Q: Things coming from outside appear to us as if they were our own—part of ourselves.

SRI AUROBINDO: That is what they always do—if anything responds. If one feels them as wholly outside, that means no response is being given.

They must certainly go out—so that when the Force descends it may not get mixed up with these things.

The enemies always watch for their chance, so long as they can have any.

Q: But what can one do when the difficulty seems overwhelmingly great?

SRI AUROBINDO: If you cannot do anything else, you must at least remain detached—there is always a part of the being that can remain detached and go on persisting calling down the Force from above.

NAGIN DOSHI

THE SECRET OF THE VEDA

SRI AUROBINDO

CHAPTER XI

THE IMAGE OF THE OCEANS AND THE RIVERS

THE three riks of the third hymn of Madhuchchhandas in which Saraswati has been invoked, run as follows in the Sanskrit:—

*Pāvakā naḥ saraswatī, vājebhir vājīnīvatī;
yajñam vastu dhiyāvaṣuḥ.*

*Chetantī sumatīnām, codayitrī sūṅtān'ām;
yajñam dadhe saraswatī.*

*Maho arṇaḥ saraswatī, pracetayati ketumā;
dhiyo viśvā virājati.*

The sense of the first two verses is clear enough when we know Saraswati to be that power of the Truth which we call inspiration. Inspiration from the Truth purifies by getting rid of all falsehood, for all sin according to the Indian idea is merely falsehood, wrongly inspired emotion, wrongly directed will and action. The central idea of life and ourselves from which we start is a falsehood and all else is falsified by it. Truth comes to us as a light, a voice, compelling a change of thought, imposing a new discernment of ourselves and all around us. Truth of thought creates truth of vision and truth of vision forms in us truth of being, and out of truth of being (*satyam*) flows naturally truth of emotion, will and action. This is indeed the central notion of the Veda.

Saraswati, the inspiration, is full of her luminous plenitudes, rich in substance of thought. She upholds the Sacrifice, the offering of the mortal being's activities to the divine by awakening his consciousness so that it assumes right states of emotion and right movements of thought in accordance with the Truth from which she pours her illuminations and by impelling in it the rise of those truths which, according to the Vedic Rishis, liberate the life and being from falsehood, weakness and limitation and open to it the doors of the supreme felicity.

By this constant awakening and impulsion, summed up in the word, perception, *ketu*, often called the divine perception, *daivya ketu*, to distinguish it from the false mortal vision of things,—Saraswati brings into active consciousness in the human being the great flood or great movement, the Truth-consciousness

itself, and illumines with it all our thoughts. We must remember that this Truth-consciousness of the Vedic Rishis is a supra-mental plane, a level of the hill of being (*adreh sanu*) which is beyond our ordinary reach and to which we have to climb with difficulty. It is not part of our waking being, it is hidden from us in the sleep of the superconscient. We can then understand what Madhuchchhandas means when he says that Saraswati by the constant action of the inspiration awakens the Truth to consciousness in our thoughts.

But this line may, so far as the mere grammatical form of it goes, be quite otherwise translated; we may take *maho ar̥ṇas* in apposition to Saraswati and render the verse "Saraswati, the great river, awakens us to knowledge by the perception and shines in all our thoughts". If we understand by this expression, "the great river," as Sayana seems to understand, the physical river in the Panjab, we get an incoherence of thought and expression which is impossible except in a nightmare or a lunatic asylum. But it is possible to suppose that it means the flood of inspiration and that there is no reference to the great ocean of the Truth-consciousness. Elsewhere, however, there is repeated reference to the gods working by the vast power of the great flood (*mahnā mahato ar̥ṇavasya*) where there is no reference to Saraswati and it is improbable that she should be meant. It is true that in the Vedic writings Saraswati is spoken of as the secret self of Indra,—an expression, we may observe, that is void of sense if Saraswati is only a northern river and Indra the god of the sky, but has a very profound and striking significance if Indra be the illumined Mind and Saraswati the inspiration that proceeds from the hidden plane of the supra-mental Truth. But it is impossible to give Saraswati so important a place with regard to the other gods as would be implied by interpreting the phrase *mahnā mahato ar̥ṇavasya* in the sense "by the greatness of Saraswati". The gods act, it is continually stated, by the power of the Truth, *ṛtena*, but Saraswati is only one of the deities of the Truth and not even the most important or universal of them. The sense I have given is, therefore, the only rendering consistent with the general thought of the Veda and with the use of the phrase in other passages.

Let us then start from this decisive fact put beyond doubt by this passage—whether we take the great stream to be Saraswati itself or the Truth-ocean—that the Vedic Rishis used the image of water, a river or an ocean, in a figurative sense and as a psychological symbol, and let us see how far it takes us. We notice first that existence itself is constantly spoken of in the Hindu writings, in Veda, Purana, and even philosophical reasoning and illustration as an ocean. The Veda speaks of two oceans, the upper and the lower waters. These are the ocean of the subconscious, dark and inexpressive, and the ocean of the superconscient, luminous and eternal expression but beyond the human mind. Vamadeva in the last hymn of the fourth Mandala speaks of these two oceans.

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He says that a honeyed wave climbs up from the ocean and by means of this mounting wave which is the Soma (*anshu*) one attains entirely to immortality; that wave or that Soma is the secret name of the clarity (*ghṛtasya*, the symbol of the clarified butter); it is the tongue of the gods; it is the nodus (*nābhi*) of immortality.

*Samudrād ūrmir madhumān udārad,
upānsunā sam amṛtatvam eti;
Ghṛtasya nāma guhyaṁ yad asti,
jihvā devānām amṛtasya nābhīḥ.*

I presume there can be no doubt that the sea, the honey, the Soma, the clarified butter are in this passage at least psychological symbols. Certainly, Vamadeva does not mean that a wave or flood of wine came mounting up out of the salt water of the Indian Ocean or of the Bay of Bengal or even from the fresh water of the river Indus or the Ganges and that this wine is a secret name for clarified butter. What he means to say is clearly that out of the subconscious depths in us arises a honeyed wave of Ananda or pure delight of existence, that it is by this Ananda that we can arrive at immortality; this Ananda is the secret being, the secret reality behind the action of the mind in its shining clarities. Soma, the god of the Ananda, the Vedanta also tells us, is that which has become mind or sensational perception; in other words, all mental sensation carries in it a hidden delight of existence and strives to express that secret of its own being. Therefore Ananda is the tongue of the gods with which they taste the delight of existence; it is the nodus in which all the activities of the immortal state or divine existence are bound together. Vamadeva goes on to say "Let us give expression to this secret name of the clarity,—that is to say, let us bring out this Soma wine, this hidden delight of existence; let us hold it in this world-sacrifice by our surrenderings or submissions to Agni, the divine Will or Conscious-Power which is the Master of being. He is the four-horned Bull of the worlds and when he listens to the soul-thought of man in its self-expression, he ejects this secret name of delight from its hiding-place.

*Vayaṁ nāma pra bravāmā ghṛtasya,
asmīn yaज्ञे dhārayāmā namobhiḥ;
Upa brahmā śṛṇvac chasyamānam,
Catuśṛngo avamīd gaura etat.*

Let us note, in passing, that since the wine and the clarified butter are symbolic, the sacrifice also must be symbolic. In such hymns as this of Vamadeva's the ritualistic veil so elaborately woven by the Vedic mystics vanishes like a dis-

solving mist before our eyes and there emerges the Vedantic truth, the secret of the Veda.

Vamadeva leaves us in no doubt as to the nature of the Ocean of which he speaks; for in the fifth verse he openly describes it as the ocean of the heart, *hṛdyāt samudrāt*, out of which rise the waters of the clarity, *ghṛtasya dhārāḥ*; they flow, he says, becoming progressively purified by the mind and the inner heart, *antar hṛdā manasā pūyamānāḥ*. And in the closing verse he speaks of the whole of existence being triply established, first in the seat of Agni—which we know from other riks to be the Truth-consciousness, Agni's own home, *swan̄ damam ṛtam̄ bṛhat*,—secondly, in the heart, the sea, which is evidently the same as the heart-ocean,—thirdly, in the life of man.

*dhāman te viśvan̄ bhuvanam adhi śṛtam
antaḥ samudre hṛdyantar āyūṣi.*

The superconscient, the sea of the subconscient, the life of the living being between the two, this is the Vedic idea of existence.

The sea of the superconscient is the goal of the rivers of clarity, of the honeyed wave, as the sea of the subconscient in the heart within is their place of rising. This upper sea is spoken of as the Sindhu, a word which may mean either river or ocean; but in this hymn it clearly means ocean. Let us observe the remarkable language in which Vamadeva speaks of these rivers of the clarity. He says first that the gods sought and found the clarity, the *ghṛtam*, triply placed and hidden by the Panis in the cow, *gavi*. It is beyond doubt that *gau* is used in the Veda in the double sense of Cow and Light; the Cow is the outer symbol, the inner meaning is the Light. The figure of the cows stolen and hidden by the Panis is constant in the Veda. Here it is evident that as the sea is a psychological symbol—the heart-ocean, *samudre hṛdi*,—and the Soma is a psychological symbol and the clarified butter is a psychological symbol, the cow in which the gods find the clarified butter hidden by the Panis must also symbolise an inner illumination and not physical light. The cow is really Aditi, the infinite consciousness hidden in the subconscient, and the triple *ghṛtam* is the triple clarity of the liberated sensation finding its secret of delight, of the thought-mind attaining to light and intuition and of the truth itself, the ultimate supra-mental vision. This is clear from the second half of the verse in which it is said “One Indra produced, one Surya, one the gods fashioned by natural development out of Vena;” for Indra is the Master of the thought-mind, Surya of the supra-mental light, Vena is Soma, the master of mental delight of existence, creator of the sense-mind.

We may observe also in passing that the Panis here must perforce be spiritual enemies, powers of darkness, and not Dravidian gods or Dravidian tribes or Dravidian merchants. In the next verse Vamadeva says of the streams of the *ghṛtam* that they move from the heart-ocean shut up in a hundred prisons (pens) by the enemy so that they are not seen. Certainly, this does not mean that rivers of ghee—or of water, either—rising from the heart-ocean or any ocean were caught on their way by the wicked and unconscionable Dravidians and shut up in a hundred pens so that the Aryans or the Aryan gods could not even catch a glimpse of them. We perceive at once that the enemy, Pani, Vritra of the hymns is a purely psychological conception and not an attempt of our forefathers to conceal the facts of early Indian history from their posterity in a cloud of tangled and inextricable myths. The Rishi Vamadeva would have stood aghast at such an unforeseen travesty of his ritual images. We are not even helped if we take *ghṛta* in the sense of water, *hṛdya samudra* in the sense of a delightful lake, and suppose that the Dravidians enclosed the water of the rivers with a hundred dams so that the Aryans could not even get a glimpse of them. For even if the rivers of the Panjab all flow out of one heart-pleasing lake, yet their streams of water cannot even so have been triply placed in a cow and the cow hidden in a cave by the cleverest and most inventive Dravidians.

“These move”, says Vamadeva, “from the heart-ocean; penned by the enemy in a hundred enclosures they cannot be seen; I look towards the streams of the clarity, for in their midst is the Golden Reed. Entirely they stream like flowing rivers becoming purified by the heart within and the mind; these move, waves of the clarity, like animals under the mastery of their driver. As if on a path in front of the Ocean (*sindhu*, the upper ocean) the mighty ones move compact of forceful speed but limited by the vital force (*vāta*, *vāyu*), the streams of clarity; they are like a straining horse which breaks its limits, as it is nourished by the waves.” On the very face of it this is the poetry of a mystic concealing his sense from the profane under a veil of images which occasionally he suffers to grow transparent to the eye that chooses to see. What he means is that the divine knowledge is all the time flowing constantly behind our thoughts, but is kept from us by the internal enemies who limit our material of mind to the sense-action and sense-perception so that though the waves of our being beat on banks that border upon the superconscient, the infinite, they are limited by the nervous action of the sense-mind and cannot reveal their secret. They are like horses controlled and reined in; only when the waves of the light have nourished their strength to the full does the straining steed break these limits and they flow freely towards That from which the Soma-wine is pressed out and the sacrifice is born.

THE SECRET OF THE VEDA

*Yatra somah sūyate yatra yajño,
ghṛtasya dhāra abhi tat pavante.*

This goal is, again, explained to be that which is all honey,—*ghṛtasya dhārā madhumat pavante*; it is the Ananda, the divine Beatitude. And that this goal is the Sindhu, the superconscient ocean, is made clear in the last rik, where Vamadeva says, “May we taste that honeyed wave of thine”—of Agni, the divine Purusha, the four-horned Bull of the worlds—“which is borne in the force of the Waters where they come together.”

*Apām anīke samithe ya ābhṛtaḥ,
tam aśyāma madhumantaṁ ta ūrmim*

We find this fundamental idea of the Vedic Rishis brought out in the Hymn of Creation (X. 129) where the subconscious is thus described. “Darkness hidden by darkness in the beginning was this all, an ocean without mental consciousness....Out of it the One was born by the greatness of Its energy. It first moved in it as desire which was the first seed of mind. The Masters of Wisdom found out in the non-existent that which builds up the existent; in the heart they found it by purposeful impulsion and by the thought-mind. Their ray was extended horizontally; there was something above, there was something below.” In this passage the same ideas are brought out as in Vamadeva’s hymn but without the veil of images. Out of the subconscious ocean the One arises in the heart first as desire; he moves there in the heart-ocean as an unexpressed desire of the delight of existence and this desire is the first seed of what afterwards appears as the sense-mind. The gods thus find out a means of building up the existent, the conscious being, out of the subconscious darkness; they find it in the heart and bring it out by the growth of thought and purposeful impulsion, *pratiṣhyā*, by which is meant mental desire as distinguished from the first vague desire that arises out of the subconscious in the merely vital movements of nature. The conscious existence which they thus create is stretched out as it were horizontally between two other extensions; below is the dark sleep of the subconscious, above is the luminous secrecy of the superconscient. These are the upper and the lower ocean.

This Vedic imagery throws a clear light on the similar symbolic images of the Puranas, especially on the famous symbol of Vishnu sleeping after the pralaya on the folds of the snake Ananta upon the ocean of sweet milk. It may perhaps be objected that the Puranas were written by superstitious Hindu priests or poets who believed that eclipses were caused by a dragon eating the sun and moon and could easily believe that during the periods of non-creation

the supreme Deity in a physical body went to sleep on a physical snake upon a material ocean of real milk and that therefore it is a vain ingenuity to seek for a spiritual meaning in these fables. My reply would be that there is in fact no need to seek for such meanings; for these very superstitious poets have put them there plainly on the very surface of the fable for everybody to see who does not choose to be blind. For they have given a name to Vishnu's snake, the name Ananta, and Ananta means the Infinite; therefore they have told us plainly enough that the image is an allegory and that Vishnu, the all-pervading Deity, sleeps in the periods of non-creation on the coils of the Infinite. As for the ocean, the Vedic imagery shows us that it must be the ocean of eternal existence and this ocean of eternal existence is an ocean of absolute sweetness, in other words, of pure Bliss. For the sweet milk (itself a Vedic image) has, evidently, a sense not essentially different from the *madhu*, honey or sweetness, of Vamadeva's hymn.

Thus we find that both Veda and Purana use the same symbolic images; the ocean is for them the image of infinite and eternal existence. We find also that the image of the river or flowing current is used to symbolise a stream of conscious being. We find that Saraswati, one of the seven rivers, is the river of inspiration flowing from the Truth-consciousness. We have the right then to suppose that the other six rivers are also psychological symbols.

But we need not depend entirely on hypothesis and inference, however strong and entirely convincing. As in the hymn of Vamadeva we have seen that the rivers, *ghṛtasya dhārāḥ*, are there not rivers of clarified butter or rivers of physical water, but psychological symbols, so we find in other hymns the same compelling evidence as to the image of the seven rivers. For this purpose I will examine one more hymn, the first Sukta of the third Mandal sung by the Rishi Vishwamitra to the god Agni; for here he speaks of the seven rivers in language as remarkable and unmistakable as the language of Vamadeva about the rivers of clarity. We shall find precisely the same ideas recurring in quite different contents in the chants of these two sacred singers.

SOME LETTERS ON SADHANA

SRI AUROBINDO

Q: It is exactly one and a half year since I have been here, but I can't detect any sign of progress.

SRI AUROBINDO: You have had experiences which are signs of a future possibility. To have more within the first one and a half years it would be necessary to have the complete attitude of the sadhak and give up that of the man of the world. It is only then that progress can be rapid from the beginning.

Q: I must admit that of late I have been rather lax, especially regarding food—I mean eating with friends on Sundays. Does this Sunday indulgence have any connection with the resistance that came up in me? What was the real reason for it?

SRI AUROBINDO: Laxity and a self-externalising consciousness more occupied with outer than with inner things.

About food, tea, etc. the aim of Yoga is to have no hankerings, no slavery either to the stomach or the palate. How to get to that point is another matter—it depends often on the individual. With a thing like tea the straight and easiest way is to stop it. As to food, the best way usually is to take the food given you, practise non-attachment and follow no fancies. That would mean giving up the Sunday indulgence. The rest must be done by an inner change of consciousness and not by external means.

Q: I suppose that this is what you mean by having the complete attitude of the sadhak and giving up that of the man of the world.

SRI AUROBINDO: All these are external things that have their use, but what I mean is something more inward. I mean not to be interested in outward things for their own sake, following after them with desire, but at all times to be intent on one's soul, living centrally in the inner being and its progress, taking outward things and action only as a means for the inner progress.

Q: The question of food is to some extent within one's control, but it is not so easy to control the habitual movement of thoughts in the mind.

MOTHER INDIA

SRI AUROBINDO: Detach yourself from it—make your mind external to it, something that you can observe as you observe things occurring in the street. So long as you do not do that it is difficult to be the mind's master.

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The rigidity was in the obstinacy with which your mind and vital clung to their own ideas and vital habits and did not want to change. But the result was rather laxity, a general looseness which did not want to tune the nature to the spiritual endeavour, but let all sorts of things wander over its strings at their pleasure. Plasticity of the consciousness is necessary, but plasticity to the true touch of the Power, not to any ordinary touch of the forces in Nature. To tune all to the Higher should be your aim—then there will be the full poetry of the spirit not in writing only but in life.

(16-8-1936)

*

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Q: Constantly trying to control sex does not seem to be of much help.

SRI AUROBINDO: To think too much of sex even for suppressing it makes it worse. You have to open more to positive experience. To spend all the time struggling with the lower vital is a very slow method.

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The Mother has already told you the truth about this idea. The idea that by fully indulging the sex hunger it will be finished and disappear for ever is a deceptive pretence held out by the vital to the mind in order to get a sanction for its desire; it has no other *raison d'être* or truth or justification. If an occasional indulgence keeps the sex desire simmering, a full indulgence would only sink you in its mire. This hunger like other hungers does not cease by temporary satiation; it revives itself after a temporary abeyance and wants again indulgence. It can only go by a radical psychic rejection or a full spiritual opening with the increasing descent of a consciousness that does not want it and has the truer Ananda.

MATTER, LIFE, MIND

A SCRUTINY OF SCIENTIFIC OPINIONS

THIRD SERIES: II

WE have come to the end of our survey of the findings of science on the nature of things. After examining the problem of matter and mind and that of matter and life, we examined the character of matter in itself as disclosed by the science of physics. Scrutinising the field of this science we have found strong positive indications that the physical universe is not a closed complete system but a particular face and front of a larger reality transcending the material without excluding it, as well as that the methods of theoretical physics and the objectives of this method are incompatible with the temper and turn of materialism. In other words, physical science supports, though necessarily in an indirect way, our thesis that mind, life, matter are three principles interacting and that the interaction is possible because each lower principle is an "involution" or concealment of the one above it. Thus we have a pluralism playing on the basis of a monism of the highest principle.

What remains now is to set in proper conceptual focus the phenomenon of interaction and proceed from it to a clearer picture of the three principles in our world-system as well as of that world-system as a whole. The best starting-point here is by way of an analogy from the view of matter taken by the biologist Julian Huxley in one of his neo-materialistic declarations. He denies any gap in the continuity of physical processes. According to him there is no special vital principle injected into material phenomena nor is there a break in them at which we can say "here mind appears" or "there personality enters"; all is development of matter. But Huxley rejects what he calls the old "one-sided materialism" to which mind is a mere subtilisation of matter and he puts aside also the notion of some materialists that mind is not pervasive of all life. On the second point we may take him to be in agreement with the assertion of G. N. Ridley in *Man: The Verdict of Science* on the question: Where in the scale of organisms are we to locate the first signs of mind? Ridley writes: "There appear to be two schools of thought. One, taking a very broad view of the problem, sees even in the most elementary responsive and apparently purposive behaviour of the simpler creatures of the pond the working of an element of mind. The other holds that mind is recognisable as such only in those animals

which possess that degree of flexibility of behaviour which marks them as something more than mere automata. A strictly objective view of the matter would favour the first hypothesis; the second obviously admits subjective criteria." But Huxley goes beyond even the first hypothesis. To him mind is co-extensive with matter. And it is co-extensive not as a subtle state of matter itself but as something irreducible to matter since science has never been able to present mind in materialistic terms: no species of "phosphorescence", as the old crude materialism suggested, nor anything amounting to a dance of protons and neutrons and electrons can be equated to mind. Yet Huxley is a neo-materialist, for he still subscribes to the old doctrine that all mental phenomena have material counterparts without which they cannot exist. The upshot of his rejection of one side of the old materialism and acceptance of the other is a "monism" in which matter and mind—the latter term broadly denoting for him "all psychical activity and experience, conscious or subconscious, sensory, emotional, cognitive and conative"—are "two aspects of one organisation," of "one world-stuff" in which the aspect of matter is the chief and that of mind merely a non-material correlate of it.

He says: "Mind or something of the same nature as mind must exist throughout the entire universe.... All the activities of the world-stuff are accompanied by mental as well as by material happenings. In most cases, however, the mental happenings are at such a low level of intensity that we cannot detect them; we may perhaps call them 'psychoid' happenings, to emphasise the difference in intensity and quality from our own psychical activities. In those organs that we call brains the psychoid activities are in some way made to reinforce each other until, as is clearly the case in higher animals, they reach a high level of intensity, and they are the dominant and specific function of the brain of man. Until we learn to detect psychoid activities of low intensity, as we have learned to do with electrical happenings, we cannot prove this. But already it has become the simplest hypothesis that will fit the facts of developmental and evolutionary continuity."

We need not pause to refute this theory. Scientifically it is refuted by all the essays already written in our series. The "facts" to which Huxley appeals are no such absolute "facts" as conceived by him. It is in a mood of dogmatism that the theory is said to be scientifically the most adequate. And Huxley himself in his other writings can be made to show up the dogmatism of it. In *The Uniqueness of Man* he has admitted extra-sensory perception as a reality: "Experiments such as those of Rhine and Tyrrell on extra-sensory guessing, experiences like those of Gilbert Murray on thought-transference, and the numerous sporadic records of telepathy and clairvoyance suggest that some people at least possess possibilities of knowledge which are not confined within

the ordinary channels of sense-perception." More recently, in a sober Foreword to a violent attack on the results of parapsychology launched by D. H. Rawcliffe who disparagingly dubs this whole branch of study "occult", Huxley asserts that he cannot follow Rawcliffe in "stigmatising studies in telepathy, clairvoyance, etc., as occult research." He regards such studies on a systematic basis as scientific. Further, in the same Foreword, he writes: "I am quite prepared to find that certain techniques, such as Rajah Yoga involving withdrawal from sense-impressions, may reveal new properties of mind, or, to put it more scientifically, result in new modes of mental activity. After all, mental activity has been enormously intensified during evolution. And we simply do not yet know the basic relation between mental activity and physical brain activity. It is extremely important to try to find out whether under certain conditions mental activity may be detached from physical; we can be sure that many possibilities of mind or mental activity are still unexplored."

The double-aspect theory *à la* Huxley cannot at all stand as an ultimate explanation. However, there is an element of truth in what he calls "developmental and evolutionary continuity." Something like a complementary-process of matter and mind, with the latter merely a non-material correlate of the former, is part of the many-sided complex of mind-matter interrelation. Although this process is not the whole psycho-physical reality, Huxleyan monism seems to obtain in some measure and is for a certain range of facts the simplest explanatory hypothesis.

In its full form the hypothesis should speak of vital and mental happenings instead of mental alone accompanying material happenings. Huxley himself perhaps intends this: for, in the same context, before launching on an illustrative aside on "electrical happenings" which we have learnt to detect almost everywhere, he remarks: "The notion that there is something of the same nature as human mind in lifeless matter at first sight appears incredible or ridiculous." The opposition made between "lifeless matter" and "mind" indicates that vital happenings are included in the latter concept, even if his definition of mind—despite being wide by its inclusion of all psychical activity and experience, conscious or subconscious, sensory, emotional, cognitive and conative—may not directly take them in. At any rate, whether Huxley includes them or not, we have in the course of our scientific scrutiny recognised life no less than mind as a distinct principle irreducible to matter and when we accept Huxleyan monism within certain limits as providing us with the right point of departure for understanding our own interacting system of several principles we have to begin with both life and mind together as non-material correlates of matter itself, a three-aspected single organisation in which matter is the chief decisive aspect, so that matter itself seems by its development and evolution to give

rise to vitality and mentality, has the appearance of becoming alive and mental in various degrees of intensity.

By analogy from such matter we have to conceive the nature of life and mind. If matter has vitality and mentality of some sort, life must have mentality and materiality of its own and mind must have materiality and vitality proper to it. No principle of the three is without the other two principles associated with it. And, once we see this, we see too that all of them have a certain commonalty diversely organised. Each is the same in a different plane, with an organisation peculiar to each. Hence the distinctness and yet a capacity to interact. It is not mind or life interacting with matter, or mind interacting with life, but one poise of mental-vital-material organisation interacting with another poise of organisation containing the same factors. The distinctness consists in the predominance of one factor over the rest. In the principle of matter, the material factor rules the vital and mental: in that of life, the vital rules the remaining two: in that of mind, the mental is the ruler of its pair of companions.

And so, when we speak of matter as involved life and life as involved mind, we do not resort to a reductionism from the higher level corresponding to the reductionism which materialists posit from the lower. Rather, holding each principle to be a three-in-one, we regard the involution of the higher in the lower as consisting in the subordination of the higher's ruling role to what was in it a subordinate play. Thus we have to conceive of life as involved mind in the sense that the principle of life which, together with the principle of matter, was subordinate to the principle of mind proper becomes predominant: similarly, matter is involved life in the sense that the material principle which, side by side with the mental, was dominated by the vital is no longer subordinate. Matter is not merely life changed to a lower scale nor life merely mind changed in the same fashion: life was always life but only its role is different and matter was always matter but just its role is altered. And yet, while there is no reductionism, it is mind, from the plane where the mental holds sway over the vital and material, that delivers a new organisation in which the vital comes to the top; and it is life-force, from the plane where it is sovereign over the mental and material, that precipitates a new organisation in which the material stands as the determinant. Therefore life is involved mind and matter involved life in a real sense without there being any reductionism.

But here we must make an important distinction inspired by the evolutionary nature of the plane on which we exist. Evolution, in a world not explainable by materialism, means the graded release of powers higher than matter from an original involution—a release due to at once the expressive urge of what is involved and the liberative pressure of the full planes of those powers

beyond matter. Can we generalise that an evolutionary process holds on the free vital and mental planes also? No. On a plane where the lowest power is not the primary factor, there cannot, strictly speaking, be an evolution. In view of this, the original involution on our own plane must be of a special order and the subordination there of two powers to one must have another meaning than elsewhere. We have to polarise involution to evolution and take subordination to connote the submergence of the superior powers in the most inferior, preliminary to their emergence from it. Precisely like evolution, involution cannot, strictly speaking, apply to any plane where the lowest is not the primary factor.

And on an involutory and evolutionary plane of matter, with life and mind not functioning in the way in which on the other planes matter and mind or else life and matter do,—that is, openly from the very start, though in subordination—life and mind cannot be bound to subordination always in the way in which matter and mind or else life and matter are bound on those planes. The graded emergence of the higher powers from their submergence carries the possibility—nay, the certainty—of their progressive domination over the inferior after a period during which they appear to be entirely determined by it as if they were its mere vital-mental correlates: the law of a permanent subordination is inapplicable where the initial state is one in which they ostensibly suffer a sheer loss of themselves and there is apparently nothing except blind brute matter utterly devoid of both life and mind. This progressive domination is just what we seem to discover when we observe the results of evolution and the seeming shows itself as fact when we demonstrate, in contradiction of the old materialism no less than of Huxleyan monism, life and mind to be distinct powers operating on matter and to be neither useless material by-products nor helpless non-material correlates of physical happenings.

Now, looking at all the planes as an *ensemble*, we may declare that in a total conception we have a single reality with three distinct yet interacting levels of its power, in each of which it is triply at work in an organisation individual to that level and in one of which it is evolutionary and in the other two what we may term “typal”—a single reality which in its essential existence must be some inconceivable fusion of the three levels but with a capacity to project them in differing modes to make a “multiverse” whose “depths” are the mental and vital planes and whose “surface” is the plane of matter. •

Two considerations, however, must modify the picture of the world-system we have presented with science’s help, and a third must supply some very significant motifs. The first arises from the double character of our own plane: this plane not only has the lowest power, matter, as its base and continent but also proceeds evolutionarily. We have said that evolution cannot occur unless the primary factor is constituted by the lowest power; but this is not tantamount to

saying that when the primary factor is constituted by the lowest power evolution is a necessity. For, there can be a subordination of the superior powers to the inferior without their subsequent graded release from it: the graded release or emergence occurs only if there is an initial subordination in the sense of submergence. Consequently, two kinds of material planes are possible. And on the one that is not involutory or evolutionary like ours the subordination of the superior powers to the inferior will not imply the seeming loss of both life and mind in blind brute matter. Matter, merely subordinating life and mind, would be quite a different thing: life and mind, though always subordinate, would always be manifest in it and there would be no travail of them, no conflict with the material base and continent. Such matter would be, like life and mind on their own planes, "typal".

And it is exactly such matter's existence that is demanded as immediate background to our world of evolution. For, this world introduces an a-symmetry. It is not the plane of matter corresponding to the other two of life and mind: a gap is left in the "depth"-series which subordinates two principles to one without submerging them. A plane of evolution is rather an amalgam of all the three principles, each having in turn a chance to subordinate the remainder, each emerging in turn as ruler in the course of time: it is an amalgam where the three strive with one another to avoid subordination and achieve dominance. In order that such a state should come about, there should be a precipitation of all the principles from planes of their own into a sort of indeterminate chaos out of which they progressively emerge with recognisable matter as the first power and therefore the base and continent. If, behind an evolving world of matter and life and mind, there are typal planes of life and mind, logic requires a typal plane of matter also. There one main fully-achieved theme with two subsidiary strains ever-present would be found in varied play rather than a difficult emergence of two strains from a developing theme which seems the sole cosmic formula, but on the other hand matter there would not become increasingly an instrument of life and mind and open to possibilities beyond the material formula however excellent.

A fourfold instead of a threefold system—fourfold with three typal cosmicities behind one cosmicity in evolutionary struggle—is therefore the result of our first consideration. The second consideration compelling us to modify our idea of a three-tiered scheme is that the mind-plane does not appear to be the highest, short of the all-fusing inconceivable status of the single reality projecting the "multiverse". Mystical experience, if it is to be believed, goes clean beyond the mental plane to not only that all-fusing state but also a state in which all stands integrated in a harmony of perfect equals—a balanced play of perfect matter, perfect life, perfect mind, brought about by a supreme dynamic principle.

This principle is hinted in ancient Indian scriptures of spiritual realisation in various terms. The Vedas invoke it as *Satyam Ritam Brihat*—the True, the Right, the Vast. The Upanishads chant of it as the ever-blissful omniscient and omnipotent Lord locked in superconscious sleep, *Prajna*; or else as the Self of supra-intellectual Knowledge which has the master discrimination of a multi-form creativity, *Vijnāna*; or, again, simply as the dynamic Immense above mind, *Mahas*. There is inspired reference to it also in the vision of the threefold embodiment of the Divine Being: *sthula sharira*, the gross body of vitalised and mentalised matter that is the surface of reality—*sukshma sharira*, the subtle body of matter, life and mind as they are in reality's depths—*kāraṇa sharira*, the causal body of the original and ideal materiality, vitality and mentality that are on reality's heights as modes of the supreme creative and operative Truth, the sovereign dynamism manifested out of the ineffable all-fusing Essence, what Sri Aurobindo with a total realisation of it in even wide-awake experience has designated as Supermind or Truth-Consciousness.

Science, of course, knows nothing about this divine principle, nor even about whatever lesser play of it may be in force between it and the mind-plane as connective sub-territories or "anterooms" of its plenary splendour, a lesser play which the world's different religions as well as certain philosophies figure as "Heaven" or "Nous". Science at its top knows only of the plane to which the mental phenomena of telepathy and precognition are pointers. But with the acceptance of these pointers its whole stance *vis-à-vis* the varieties of religious experience and the revelations of mystical and spiritual realisation must undergo a change. Bertrand Russell's statement that the declarations of mystics can be taken merely as expressive of psychological phenomena and not of aspects of ontological truth can no longer have the full support of scientific observation; for science has already through parapsychology caught sight of an ontological truth whose greater ranges may with reason be surmised to be compassed in diverse degrees by mysticism and spirituality. Science's world-view, therefore, holds as a faint glimmer on its horizon a plane beyond that of mind, and its scheme of monism-in-pluralism must tentatively be fivefold (or, if we count the all-fusing status as an additional ultimate plane, sixfold).

The second modifying consideration, by thus extending the scheme, extends also the vision of evolutionary fulfilment on earth. For, not only matter, life and mind are the principles in action on each plane: there is too the ultra-mental divine principle. The involution from which earth-evolution starts must be holding this divine principle no less than subtle matter, subtle life and subtle mind. The three latter principles have to a certain extent evolved and been established in all humanity with the aid of pressure from the planes where they are dominant. The divine principle is known by nothing more than brief touches or

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by some reflection in the developed consciousness of a few. But its evolution too is part of earth's destiny and must take place in proportion as there are the urge and aspiration from within and the pressure and "grace" from beyond. The outcome of its evolution would be a divinely dynamic status of Being, Consciousness and Bliss—a sovereign Truth-Power, as it were,—effectuating an absolute perfection of mind and life and body.

Here enters the third consideration with the query: Has this perfection a really individual sense? Of course, evolution, the long process which makes for perfection across a thousand zigzags, is through individual organisms. But can we say that the organic individualisation is anything more than a passing unity achieved by the universal powers of life and mind and beyond-mind? In common parlance, is there an individual "soul" to the distinct organism, an "immortal spark" of the Divine Spirit? As regards the human organism, the specific answer of science based on extra-sensory phenomena studied under test conditions and by a statistical method, is summed up by Dr. Rhine: "Not the supernatural character of the soul, not its divine origin, its transmigration, its immortality—indeed nothing has been dealt with so far but its elemental reality....What has been found may be called a psychological soul." Dr. Rhine simply means that an extra-physical factor exists in man. This by itself does not carry us directly towards a solution of our problem. However, he adds: "It is true that, as far as we have gone, there is no conflict between this psychological soul and the common theological meaning of the term." An indirect affirmative is thus given.

Starting with it we may further affirm that under the circumstances the sense of self which is implied in the "self-awareness" which is one of our mental *differentia* from the other organisms need not be an illusion as materialism, whether one-sided or Huxleyan or any other, would think, but has every chance of being the positive sign of an immortal individual entity. This entity would not be the "capsulated ego" (Jung's phrase) which is our surface selfhood: it would be something that is both projected into that ego and continuous beyond it, something that in spite of individuality can partake of universality, the "open" subliminal and whatever is even greater, for its profoundest urge struggling through the ego capsule is to overflow to all beings, to comprehend all existence, to be world-wide and even world-transcendent. In Jungian language, we may say that it is that part of the individual consciousness which is the outward crest of the "individual unconscious" and, through the latter, a participant in the "collective unconscious." It is what Jung considers the "inner core" of our individuation, the inmost "Self" which he calls "a magnitude superordinate to the conscious ego", "a mid-point stretched between two worlds...strange to us and yet so near", taking in both consciousness and the

unconscious, "the centre of the psychic totality, as the ego is the centre of consciousness." Unlike the capsulated ego which is mostly bound up with the physical-vital-mental surface, this soul which is a depth-phenomenon peeping out would survive that surface's disintegration. And in its final essence it would be a spark of the Divine Spirit originating the universe.

Further, if evolution is the key-process on earth and if an immortal individual entity is in every human evolute, then every such soul must be a sharer in that process and must have been in an overt or covert form behind other evolutes before the present one, other evolutes both within and outside the human series. Rebirth, and not only survival of death, is a necessary postulate when evolution is understood with reference to the individual soul. And each link in the chain of rebirth must be taken as contributing in some way to a system of progress until at last the birth is attained in which not only the soul's oneness with the Divine but also the absolute perfection of mind and life and body is reached.

Thus the scheme of monism-in-pluralism which we have derived from science comes to be charged with the motifs of soul-individuality and soul-continuity. With these two motifs the philosophy of science gets completed and, in its completeness, grows the outline of a new mysticism which does not need to throw away anything really valuable in the past of religion but can put into all ancient spiritual values a mighty this-worldly meaning by assimilating the significances and stresses of scientific thought and discovery.

(To be continued)

K. D. SETHNA

POEMS

THE AVALANCHE

LOUD in the heights of the Jura, rang the thunder of the avalanche.
Who gathered its burden of snow in the nursery of the silent peaks?
Who loosed the voice of the ice in a clap of applause
To slip in precipitous ruin down the cloven ravine?
Who cracked the icicles in the throne of the hills?
What star shook desolation down upon the Alpine hamlet
That lay reposeful with moonlit swards
And the soft-pacing mists of the vale?
Who signed Necessity's stern decrees?
What messengers on the wings of cause and effect
Carried the imperial fiat to realms of sensory phenomena?
Deep in the folds of the ether a Will subsists,
A Brain of viewless space, whose nerves and tissues
Inhere in the fields of manifest matter.
It lies in the recoil of the tides and the motions of heaven and earth.
Transcendental Immortal Supreme,
The Cosmic Mind broods in the deeps of light
Designs and drafts of dreams in Time and Space.
Prescient knower of beginning and end,
It charts the way and the winds and the tides of evolution's roll
Part by part is seen the plan of the Omnipotent Force.
The stupendous unfoldment of Fate,
The Cosmic determination in Time,
Are hid from the senses of man.
 The Primaeval, the Ancient, the Lone,
That wrought out of chaos the star and the sun,
Labours in the flesh of the whole,
A silent immutable motion,

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A pulse in the pulse of its creatures.
Mist-enfolded Alps whose pine-fields strive to climb the sky,
Whose wide-mouthed torrents arched by the rainbow
Shoot from resounding caverns,
Your altitudes where the wings of the eagle droop,
Your reverberating cliffs where the rose of sunlight lingers,
Your undulating breadth of hills
That bear in their bosom the source of living waters,
Your flowers that fringe the dizzy precipices,
Are the voice of the sole and invisible Divinity.

MEHDI IMAM

BRIGHT BLUE BIRD

FROM what strange world comest thou, O bright blue bird?
How fresh thy beauty, ageless, unburdened, free?
What bringst thou here, O graceful and light-furred?
Hast thou, soft fire-limbed charmer, a message for me?

Inviting, alluring, are thy grandiose looks
That seem to stir our slumberous heavy life.
O witness and defy the kingdom of rooks
And claim thy seat beyond all flutter and strife!

We know not thy home, nor what thy visit's toil is,
Thy "who" and "how" may remain a mystery,
Yet thy large advent on this crawling soil is
A promise of our own flight and liberty.

Even though man's roots lie locked in the abyss,
God's zeniths too are made for him to kiss.

HAR KISHAN SINGH

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FAREWELL

I SET my boat afloat on the ocean vast,
I bid farewell at the dead of night to the shore;
From the hyaline sky celestial beams were cast
That made the waves put forth a luminous lore.

But suddenly dire clouds gathered thick in the sky,
The silver of moon and star was lost to the view;
The anger of the bellowing waves ran high,
The palpable dark veiled all the horizon-hue.

Yet someone seemed to hold the rudder fast,
I knew not who and why and whence he came;
I awoke at day-break to see the end of the blast,
A small light streak in the east leapt into flame.

On a tranquil note the waves in ecstasy swear
Fealty now to the God-touch everywhere.

ROBI GUPTA

BOOKS IN THE BALANCE

The Divine Collaborators by *Rishabhchand*, Publishers: Sri Aurobindo Ashram Pondicherry. 1955 pp. viii+74 Price Rs. 1-4-0.

ALL those who have studied Sri Aurobindo's and the Mother's vivifying literature are at a very early stage struck by the remarkable identity between their aims and messages. Here are two intensely truth-avid personalities from the two hemispheres embodying in themselves the entire yearning of humanity, and its "dateless cry" to the "limitless sublime". Both of them are touched early in their lives to their depths by the "tears in the nature of things" and are fired by a passion to dedicate all of themselves to wipe them off and discover the true elixir of life. Sri Aurobindo has narrated how while he was a boy of eleven he was seized of a powerful inner conviction that his life was henceforward not for himself but for others. The Mother likewise describes in her prayer of the 22nd February, 1914, how at the age of 13 and for full one year every night, when she went to bed, she beheld a wonderfully beatific vision, "beside which nothing appeared to me more beautiful, nothing made me more happy". "It seemed to me that I came out of my body and rose straight up above the house, then above the town, very high. I saw myself then clad in a magnificent golden robe longer than myself; and as I rose, the robe lengthened, spreading in a circle round me to form, as it were, an immense roof over the town. Then I would see coming out from all sides men, women, children, old men, unhappy men; they gathered under the outspread robe, imploring help, recounting their miseries, their sufferings, their pains. In reply, the robe, supple and living, stretched out to them individually and as soon as they touched it they were consoled or healed." Such was the aspiration of the Mother as a child, and to translate that aspiration into reality became her one aim in life as she grew up. This was the symbolic vision which was to become a reality later and to which she dedicated her entire life.

The most remarkable fact is that both these ardent souls when they grew up had not only an identical aspiration but also the same vision of the Truth which alone when realised and brought down could effectively fulfil it. This aspiration was to heal the aeonic gulf between matter and spirit; to build a rainbow bridge, marrying the soil to the sky,

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And sow in this dancing planet midge
The moods of infinity.

The Truth which they reached independently of each other was the Truth of Supermind, the plane of consciousness far above mind, the originating, Consciousness, creatrix of the worlds, the very home of Truth. It is this consciousness which integrates for ever the One and the Many, where multiplicity merges itself into Unity and yet is not abolished where Absolute Power is coexistent with Absolute Knowledge, Absolute Existence and Absolute Delight. "The descent of this Truth on earth alone, they saw, could achieve the goal of their aspiration and bring

God's forces to waiting nature
To help with wide-winged peace her tormented labour
And heal with joy her ancient sorrow,
Casting down light on the inconscient darkness.

We compliment Rishabh Chand for this concise and very readable book in which he has effectively brought home the above "identity of thoughts, aspirations and ideals of the Mother and Sri Aurobindo before they had even heard of each other." Here, truly as the author makes out, is a miracle of miracles—two personalities born one in the East and the other in the West, embodying the aspiration of the earth for a new evolutionary leap carving out the same inner paths and arriving at the same plateaus "eternal sunned".

The author's style has its usual force and lucidity. His clear and pithy exposition of the thought and message of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother as also the quotations from their writings which he has culled so painstakingly will be found to be of great help to all those who would like to acquaint themselves with their integral Yoga.

To bring out the identity which is the thesis of the author he studies Sri Aurobindo's and the Mother's message under four different heads to each of which he devotes a chapter. (1) The Divine Union, (2) Physical Transformation through service in an integral surrender (3) Conquest of the subconscious and the Inconscient and (4) the Divine manifestation and the Divine Life. These are also the four cardinal steps of the Integral Yoga whose whole endeavour is to attain union with the Supreme Divine Consciousness, to transform the inner and outer life of man and divinise his very physical body. For this last consummation the Light must conquer and transmute the bedrock of inconscience, the base of matter and all life. Only when this latter miracle is achieved by the Supramental Light, will the free and plenary manifestation of the Divine be possible—the Kingdom of Heaven on earth.

Speaking of this, Sri Aurobindo writes, as quoted by the author, in one of his letters, "The whole physical life must be transformed. This material world does not want a change of consciousness in us. It says in effect, 'You retire into bliss, become luminous, have the Divine Knowledge but that does not alter me. I still remain the hell I practically am. The true change of consciousness is one that will change the physical conditions of the world and make it an entirely new creation.'" "By transformation," the author explains, "Sri Aurobindo does not mean mere purification....By physical transformation, he means, a reversal of the whole physical consciousness and a radical conversion of the very grain and gamut of its working....a divinising of the law of the body....It is only when, transcending the mind, we have climbed to the truth in its own domain that we can bring its authentic omnipotent Force to purify and transform our nature, mental, vital and physical."

The book is replete with illuminating quotations from the Mother's writings in which she had laid this same stress on transforming the physical life long before she met Sri Aurobindo. In *The Supreme Discovery*, a rare gem of spiritual literature, she says, "Let us allow ourselves to be penetrated and transformed by this Divine Love and give up to him, without reservation, this marvellous instrument, our material organism. "And again, in a speech delivered in France in 1912, (two years before she met Sri Aurobindo), "Whatever therefore may be the possible degree of perfection, consciousness and knowledge that our deeper being possesses, the simple fact that it is incarnated in a physical body gives rise to obstacles to the purity of its manifestation. And yet the incarnation has for its very goal precisely the Victory over these obstacles, the transformation of matter."

The identity is again most remarkable when both of them proclaim that the time has come when this colossal and staggering miracle will be accomplished on earth. Sri Aurobindo wrote in one of his letters, "I know the supramental descent is inevitable—I have faith in view of my experience that the time can be and should be now and not in a later age." And in her prayer of the 17th August, 1913, the Mother speaks of flying into "The Divine atmosphere with the power to return as messengers to the earth and announce the glorious tidings of Thy Advent which is near." And again in another prayer on November 2, 1913, she says to the Divine "But the hour of Thy manifestation has come. And canticles of joy will soon break out from every side."

The author closes the book with an interesting chapter on the present life of the Ashram, how the Mother after the tremendous event of the passing of Sri Aurobindo has been carrying out the joint mission and bringing it to fulfilment. "What has been achieved", he writes, "is little by the side of what she has to achieve for God and humanity—a refounding of human life on the peace

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and bliss and creative harmony of the Spirit, a perfect revelation of God in matter.”

The Master's lines ring in our ears:

A little more and the new life's doors
Shall be carved in silver light
With its aureate roof and mosaic floors
In a great world bare and bright.

JAGADISH KHANNA

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AMONG the major languages of India, Panjabi is one which has been till very recently, in some ways, the least fortunate of all. While it has always been the spoken language of the Land of Five Rivers it never enjoyed official patronage. The Court language ever since the Mohammedan invasion, from across the Khyber, has been either Persian or Urdu, and Panjabi had little importance even in schools where the medium of instruction was Urdu and then English. The literate people (literacy meant knowledge of Urdu) though they spoke Panjabi in homes wrote always in Hindi, Urdu or English, and Panjabi was almost completely ousted from the Press and the platform. Budding poets and literatures with very few exception chose Urdu as their medium and the Panjab gave to the literary world one of its greatest Urdu poets, Iqbal. Ever since the advent of freedom, however, the Panjabis too have been fast developing a language consciousness and trying hard to make up the enormous distance which all these centuries the other Indian languages have travelled. Bengali, Tamil, Telugu, Gujerati and Marathi etc. have all a mature literature and vast resources of vocabulary but Panjabi though a beautiful and sweet language will take quite some time to grow rich and standardised enough for literary and especially philosophic expression.

With this background in view, we greatly congratulate the Publishers of *Chanan* for bringing out this excellent first issue. *Chanan* means Light and few names could have been more befitting for a journal devoted to the interpretation of the luminous and life-giving message of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother.

Almost two thirds of the present issue is a rendering in Panjabi of selections from Sri Aurobindo and the Mother's writings. The language is remarkably faithful to the text though at some places, owing to the very nature of the style and content of the original and the great paucity of adequate words in Panjabi, it may appear heavy and unfamiliar. This difficulty arises in Hindi also and will continue to arise till the words used in it for expressing Sri Aurobindo's powerful new thought are widely and commonly accepted and fixed. The Editor has on the other hand shown considerable ingenuity in coining new words in Panjabi by giving a slight twist to those already extant to serve his purpose.

The selection from Sri Aurobindo and the Mother's writings is wide enough to interest a wide variety of readers from the casual to the serious. Besides that, there are some good poems and two interesting and meaningful stories all in fluent Panjabi. The poem 'Bhambar' (Conflagration) is aglow with an ardent spiritual fervour and will be relished by all aspirants. The Publishers have done well in printing the journal both in Gurumukhi and Devanagri scripts, which fact should go a long way in making it accessible even to Hindi-knowing Panjabis, in and outside the Panjab. We wish the Publishers all success and hope that in years to come the journal will occupy an important place in Panjabi literature and thought.

JAGADISH KHANNA

Literature and Science by *B. Ifor Evans* (George Allen & Unwin, Ltd, London. pp. 114. Price 8-6-0.

IT has been said that the scientist writes objectively and the artist writes subjectively: that the scientist simply presents the things as they are, and the artist presents them as they affect his mind. Though there is a bit of simplification in this statement it touches on the obvious difference between the scientist and the artist. But there is, of course, very much more to it. Perhaps the fundamental difference is that the scientist is concerned with "an analytical and experimental method of examining the universe by processes that are, wherever possible, quantitative" while the artist is concerned with "an individual view of life, an intuitive, visionary and prophetic view", as Dr. Ifor Evans puts it. Obviously these indicate different points of view, and hence it is interesting to note how science and literature, scientists and literary men have reacted to each other. This is what Dr. Ifor Evans does in a series of short, thoughtful and clear chapters.

MOTHER INDIA

There is no doubt that the present is a predominantly scientific age. Poetry and literature in general came into being and flourished during ages that were totally different from the modern. The workings of the poet's mind, the materials with which he worked, the technicalities that he employed were all grown out of the circumstances of a period of time different from the present. The modern conditions may have crept up unperceived, but there they are. Superficially there is the radio and the return to the spoken word. How does it affect literature and the arts? But a more important question than that is as to how the changed outlook, the new philosophy of life, affects the poet. Can the poet keep abreast of the scientific advancement and scientific point of view?

For a proper discussion of this both a philosophical and a historical study are needed. So, after posing the question the author takes up the history of the relations between scientists and poets. It begins seriously only from the time of Bacon. At first poets welcomed the scientists and their work. Bacon himself, however, gave a material view of beauty and therefore called poetry a snare. It was Donne who first showed himself disturbed by the new learning in science and astronomy. He wrote:

And new philosophy calls all in doubt
The Element of fire is quite put out;
The Sun is lost, and th' earth and no man's wit
Can well direct him where to look for it.

Milton has shown in his writings that he was aware of the new learning, but he does not seem to have taken it very seriously. Other literary men associated themselves with the scientists, and when the Royal Society was established men of letters were also associated with it. For a long time it was not realized that science would be speaking in a language alien to the literary men. It was not even dreamed of that the scientist's view of life would be different. In fact some scientists like Boyle interested themselves in literary work, and science had its influence in literature. As Dr. Evans says, it was perhaps due to the influence of the scientific spirit of the time that the heroic couplet was chosen as the dominant verse form since it is "ordered, precise, and employable in analysis and criticism."

But it was in the eighteenth century itself that the first major attack on science came, and the leader of that was Jonathan Swift. *The Battle of the Books* is usually taken as referring to the competition between ancient and modern literature. That is true, but, as Dr. Evans suggests, the pretensions of the man of science were also probably in Swift's mind. In any case the satire of that pretension is clear in the *Voyage To Laputa*. But to suggest that Swift was

unaware of the true value of science is to go quite astray. He had too shrewd a mind for that. He made fun of Newton for different reasons. In any case the mockery in the dinner with mutton cut into equilateral triangles, and beef into rhomboid, and pudding into cycloid is no mere attack on science since other items at the dinner are shaped into fiddles, flutes and harps. Even Pope who recognized the value of Newton ridiculed the vanity and lack of spiritual understanding of some drunk with the new knowledge. For, did he not write?—

Go, wondrous creature! mount where Science guides,
Go, measure earth, weigh air, and state the tides,
Instruct the planets in what orbs to run,
Correct old Time, and regulate the sun;
Go teach Eternal Wisdom how to rule—
Then drop into thyself, and be a fool.

But Dr. Evans notes the influence of the scientific spirit in his style also. For he notes truly: "Pope's verse with his defined couplet, its close application to human experience, was adjusted to the growing scientific spirit of his period. His language was one in which the intellect remained in control."

As the years rolled by the antagonism between the scientist and the poet became marked. Blake the mystic and the seer naturally saw a red rag in the scientist's materialism. Dr. Evans suggests that Blake was opposed to the reason, analysis and experiment of Bacon, Locke and Newton. But that is to put it in a way that leads wrongly. It was not exactly reason or even analysis and experiment that offended Blake. It was the materialistic attitude and outlook and the disregard of vision and of spiritual interest. He wanted that imagination and intuition should have their proper recognition; and he opposed the attempt to put anything else in their place. Keats again has passages that suggest that he felt philosophy and reason destroyed poetry, and his lines in *Lamia* are the most powerful lines pointing that way:

Do not all charms fly
At the mere touch of cold philosophy?

But these lines should not be taken at their face value, since the romantic nature of his theme and the illusions he wanted to produce must also be taken into consideration. Besides, in his letters he shows that he could think and study in a purely intellectual way.

The same is true of Wordsworth also. In his pure adoration of nature he would admit of no mere analysis and reason. It was all vision. His heart leaps up when he sees the rainbow in the sky; the mere contact with nature teaches

him lessons that are too deep for tears; and the ways in which he learns these lessons are certainly not those of the scientist but of the visionary and the poet. Yet he was not unaware of the value of mathematics and science in general. He speaks of their "clear and solid evidence." But still poetry was to him "the breath and finer spirit of all knowledge: the impassioned expression which is in the countenance of all science." Intuition, mystical experience, these were the most valuable to him. Coleridge's lines:

O Lady! we receive but what we give,
And in our life alone does Nature live

may be said to show the attitude of the poets to the investigations of the scientists. That is why Shelley who was by nature interested in the scientific gives in the best of his poems only the fruits of pure imaginative realizations. After him there were many poets who did have even scientific training, and yet their attitude has been alienated from the scientists. Tennyson, Browning and T.S.Eliot are examples of these.

Such being the history of the relations between the scientists and artists what is to be the position of the artist in the modern world so prominently scientific? Dr. Evans considers this question very carefully. From all that is apparent, the poet's position in this world is not in jeopardy. In spite of all the advance of science that, as it were, envelopes man, there is a vital need and consequent place for poetry and the arts. But the artist should not yield to the pressure of science. He should hold on to his proper sphere—individual study and observation of life, keen awareness of the inspirations of his spirit, willing acceptance of his visions, and free expression of his deepest reactions in the form that is naturally fitted to him. He must not be blind to the advancement of science in all its forms. Only, it should also form a means for his inspiration. Even from the terrors of science he should be able to bring out magnificence of life, and thus poetry and the arts can have even a more glorious lease of life.

P.L.STEPHEN

METAPHYSICS NOTES*

I. THE SUBJECT-MATTER OF METAPHYSICS

At the outset metaphysics appears to be confronted with a serious and challenging dilemma. Metaphysics, like all the sciences, is a rational inquiry, and such an inquiry presupposes a definition, however provisional, of its scope and subject-matter. In the case of the non-philosophical sciences (in future, for convenience, we shall use the word 'Science' and contrast Science with Philosophy), the initial problem of definition presents little or no difficulty; e.g. Physics may be defined as the science which attempts to determine the nature and constitution of Matter and the laws of its behaviour. Geology is concerned with the earth's crust, the rocks, and their strata, and so on. There is no starting controversy which divides physicists into different conflicting groups, concerning what their science is about. There may be differences of opinion on specific questions which arise within the science, which differences may even harden into opposite schools of thought but even such differences presuppose an explicit agreement on the question, what it is that these experts, holding conflicting views, are engaged in investigating. We do not hear of scientists in any field falling out at the start and forming different schools of science in that field over the problem of deciding on their subject-matter. This means that in the case of Science its proper function begins after its subject-matter is defined. The mere definition of Physics, which is a science dealing with Matter, does not itself give us a theory of Matter or in anyway correct or enlarge the commonsense conception of Matter with which we start. A definition of Astronomy will not tell us anything about the collocation of heavenly bodies or determine their courses round the sun. Thus it is possible to understand in a general way the definition of Astronomy, without becoming an astronomer; and the same is true of the other sciences.

When, however, we come to Philosophy and particularly to Metaphysics, we find our inquiry blocked at the very start. We cannot readily indicate the subject-matter of Metaphysics, as we do that of any science, for the subject-matter of Metaphysics does not lie before us for all to see. Books on Metaphysics by writers whose views differ radically from each other, usually attempt

* Given by the author at a Bombay College to his class in Western Philosophy.

in the first chapter to say what Metaphysics deals with. The definitions are invariably couched in a vague language and indicate the subject-matter of Metaphysics by such terms as 'Reality', 'Being as such' or 'the Universe as a Whole'. But these terms stand in need of a good deal of explanation and are by no means intelligible as soon as they are heard. Besides, whatever definition of Philosophy we arrive at must not be arbitrarily chosen but must be seen to be inevitable. Each philosopher gives a definition of his subject which reflects his own philosophical bias, or at any rate is influenced by his particular philosophical orientation. This, therefore, is the dilemma in which Philosophy appears to be placed: it cannot start its inquiry unless its province is mapped out and distinguished from the province of the sciences, and it cannot arrive at its proper subject-matter without a great deal of discussion and disputation which is itself philosophical. We have to philosophise in order to find out what we are to philosophise about!

This dilemma is not fatal to Metaphysics or Philosophy. (For the present, we shall use these terms interchangeably.) Properly understood, it brings out the essential character of Philosophy which distinguishes it from all Science. If this dilemma is ignored, or no attempt is made to resolve it, then Philosophy comes to be regarded as just one science among other sciences. As thus understood, it is turned into a pseudo science. From this, one of two consequences must follow. Either Metaphysics is provided with a fictitious subject-matter or the inquiry itself becomes suspect and in the end is declared to be non-existent or even meaningless. This point will be discussed later.

To return to the dilemma: To determine the subject-matter of Philosophy we have first to philosophise. But is this really an impossible or an absurd task? Should we not say on the contrary that it reveals the distinctive characteristic of an inquiry that aims at self-sufficiency and internal completeness? Whatever else Metaphysics is, it is an attempt to satisfy the urge to think without drawing on premises from outside or resting on unquestioned assumptions. Philosophy, it is said, is an unusually obstinate attempt to think. It thinks to the end, which means that it does not accept anything which is thrust upon it or recognize any assumption as setting a barrier to further thought. Science at the start is confronted with something given which at once sets a limit to scientific thought and defines its scope of inquiry. But to Philosophy nothing is given from outside, and so it follows that it can have no ready-made subject matter which it has to recognize before beginning its inquiry.

This, of course, does not mean that Philosophy has no subject-matter, but only that the awareness of the subject-matter of Philosophy is itself the result of a philosophical process. One has to be a philosopher in order to understand what philosophy deals with. To define itself or its subject-matter is itself

a philosophical problem whose solution is reached only after an elaborate inquiry. The answer to the question, 'What is Philosophy?' does not therefore merely indicate the scope of Philosophy, but in doing so actually presents us with the outlines of a philosophical system. In fact, it may even be said that it is the whole business of Philosophy to define or deepen its awareness of itself. It is thus not accurate to say that our definition of Philosophy is influenced by the particular philosophical system we adopt. Framing the definition of Philosophy and constructing a philosophical system are really not two processes, the former either depending on or initiating the latter, but one and the same process. To arrive at a definition of Philosophy is at the same time to construct a philosophical system, at least in outline.

We have still to answer the question, 'How is it possible to philosophise without a given subject-matter? On what is our thinking to operate?' Let us consider what alternatives are left to us if, distinguishing Philosophy from Science, we reject the possibility of a ready-made subject-matter for the former. One alternative is that if Philosophy is not given a subject-matter, it must create its subject-matter by thinking, and since this is not possible we have to conclude that Philosophy has no subject-matter at all; and since an inquiry without a subject-matter has nothing to inquire about, Philosophy, which claims to be a body of knowledge reached by thinking, simply does not exist.

This alternative is unacceptable because it destroys itself. The argument either rests on a mere assumption, in which case it must fail to produce conviction, or if it is self-justifying then it is itself an example of that species of thinking which it declares to be non-existent. Our rational mind feels an irresistible urge not only to think, but to think to the end; and that is why there is Philosophy as distinguished from science. To deny Philosophy without thinking to the end is arbitrary and therefore the denial is unworthy of consideration. The claim to have thought to the end in reaching the conclusion that Philosophy is non-existent or impossible is obviously incompatible with the conclusion reached. We may say adapting the words of Mc Taggart: No man can ever set out to demolish philosophy without demolishing himself in the process.¹ Though few may pursue it, Philosophy remains an inescapable necessity of our rational life.

Is there then another alternative besides this suicidal one, if we reject the view that Philosophy is confronted at the outset with a subject-matter? The fact that there is Philosophy is sufficient to prove that there must be. The solution lies in the view already expressed that the main task of philosophy is to grow increasingly conscious of its own self. Of all rational inquiries, it is Philosophy alone that is critical of itself in that it attempts to come to a clear

¹ Mc Taggart said, 'No man ever went out to break Logic but in the end Logic broke him.'

consciousness of what it is we do when we philosophise. A progressive deepening of self-consciousness implies that knowledge consists not in knowing what was previously unknown, but in knowing better what was already known. Thus at the very start Philosophy is conscious of its subject-matter, only this consciousness is vague and implicit. Philosophical thinking is necessary to determine its subject-matter, but this determination is nothing more than becoming explicitly aware of that which was always an object of knowledge. This then is the solution of the paradox, which confronted us at the start, viz. we must philosophise in order to find out what we are to philosophise about. True, but there is no paradox if we realize that this finding is a passage not from ignorance to knowledge, but from knowledge of one kind to knowledge of another kind, from implicit to explicit knowledge. To the question: 'do we or do we not know the subject-matter of Philosophy at the time when we open our philosophical inquiry?' we can only answer in the words of Socrates: "In a sense we know, in a sense we do not", i.e. we know implicitly but not explicitly.

A further distinction between Science and Philosophy arising from this discussion is that while the subject-matter of a science is directly known to be some object or a field of objects falling outside the activity of scientific thinking, the subject-matter of Philosophy is not in this way directly known. If we arrive at the subject-matter of Philosophy through a deepening of self-consciousness, then the direct subject-matter of Philosophy is the activity of philosophising itself. What philosophical activity is directed on is not known immediately but only as reflected in the activity of knowing, as an image is reflected in a mirror. We have to reach ontology through epistemology. We shall see the importance of this characteristic of Philosophy, when we discuss the value of philosophical thinking with reference to our search for Reality. We shall see that Philosophy as such is only a transitional stage in a search which culminates in a direct awareness of the philosophical 'object'.

This preliminary discussion will now enable us to make clear to ourselves what the subject-matter of Philosophy is. Philosophy as we have seen is the response to an irresistible demand which is felt implicitly by all men in virtue of their possessing a rational nature. We may not say arbitrarily that the subject-matter of Philosophy is this or that, depending on our individual fancies, but must attend to the pressure which is felt irresistibly from within and seek to make its demands and postulates explicit. A man is a scientist out of curiosity, but a philosopher out of the necessity of his nature. (Hence the inadequacy of the Platonic view that Philosophy begins in wonder.) Man is more adequately defined as a metaphysical being than as a rational animal, though for the most part and in most individuals their metaphysical nature remains buried and obscure and even unsuspected.

If we consider the demands of our metaphysical nature, we find that they are two-fold: (1) a demand for completeness, (2) a demand for absoluteness. This is seen in the fact that the metaphysical argument seeks completeness or self-sufficiency and that Metaphysics is realized to be a response to an inescapable or categorical imperative. Philosophical thinking is categorical, scientific thinking is necessarily conditional. The two demands we have spoken of may be regarded as expressions of a single demand revealed through a progressive deepening of the philosophic self-consciousness.

In the words of the Upanishads our philosophical quest is for that 'knowing which all things become known', finding which 'the knots of the heart are cut and all doubts destroyed'. We may now use a single term to describe that which Philosophy seeks to know and which it comes to know in the attempt to know itself—Reality; but this term is now intelligible to us not as something mapping out the province of an inquiry that vaguely claims to go beyond the sciences, but as a pregnant term concentrating in its meaning the outlines of an entire philosophical system.

It may here be objected that we have made an unwarrantable transition from what is only a demand of thought or a characteristic manner of thinking, i.e. thinking without assumptions, to the existence of something other than thought having the quality of completeness. It may be said: 'We may grant that there is a species of thinking which is self-sustaining and which therefore seems to stand on its own foundations, but that is no proof that there is what you call a Reality which is self-existent, an infinite substance which in the words of Spinoza is *causa sui* (cause of itself). Besides, your view seems to beg a very important question. The existence of a perfect self-dependent being is by no means self-evident. Whether such a being exists or not is one of the problems which Philosophy attempts to solve. We may be able to prove by philosophical reasoning that such a being exists but there is also the possibility that we may have to conclude that such a being does not exist or that there are not sufficient grounds for either affirming or denying its existence. The atheist and the agnostic have as much right to be called philosophers as the theist or the absolutist, and hence the subject-matter of Philosophy cannot be defined, as you propose to do, in such a way as to prejudge the issue between the believer and the unbeliever. While defining the scope of Philosophy the existence of a perfect being must remain an open question.'

It is natural for such an objection to arise and even to persist, for it is difficult for those who have not reflected on the nature of Philosophy and who confuse Philosophy with Science, to believe that the major conquests of Philosophy can be won at a single stroke. The main task of Philosophy is to justify and explain its existence through a critical self-awareness and in the attempt it must

expect to meet with opposition from those, otherwise intelligent persons, who lack a capacity for philosophical reflection. Philosophy may be called upon to prove the existence of certain things, but it is much more important for Philosophy to prove its own existence. The objection which is raised against the acceptance of an infinite being in the very definition of Philosophy is not so much a philosophical objection as an objection to Philosophy itself. It is a refusal to recognize the distinctive character of Philosophy as a rational inquiry, which entails other important differences, and amounts to a demand that Philosophy, like the sciences, should be supplied with a subject-matter from without, should come upon its proper object outside of and prior to philosophical thinking, and if it is not able to do this, then the object of philosophical thinking is automatically suspect and its existence remains unproved.

That the opposition to regarding the belief in the Infinite as implicit in our very conception of Philosophy arises in the failure to appreciate the standpoint of Philosophy, is seen from the fact that it regards the existence of a perfect being as an open question. Now an open question is one whose answer comes not from within the question or the inquiry itself, but from outside; e.g. 'Is there life on Mars?' is an open question, because it cannot be answered by reflecting on the implications of what we ask. The question itself does not commit us to an answer. But what comes from outside of thought must for thought unavoidably remain contingent, however great the evidence in its favour. It can only be affirmed conditionally and not categorically. But we have seen that philosophical thinking is categorical or self-sustaining or else it is not philosophical. The solutions of philosophical problems are never open as the solutions of scientific problems are. Philosophical conclusions are necessarily foregone. In philosophy the answer lies in the question and our task is merely to become reflectively aware of the full implications of the question. This reflection on the significance of a philosophical inquiry is by itself sufficient to reveal the answer to the fundamental ontological problem, concerning the existence of a perfect being. We have here a return of the paradox with which we started, in a different form. Of all rational inquiries, Philosophy is the most open, in the sense of being unrestricted by any assumptions and yet it is the one inquiry whose questions are closed and whose conclusions are foregone.¹ It is as if the absolute

¹ To say that philosophical questions are not open is not to say that the philosophical attitude is dogmatic. It means simply that our question commits us to an answer and that to arrive at the existence of God through a clarification of the concept of Philosophy, a concept which is inescapable, is not to *prejudge* the question of God's existence. The plea that one should always remain open-minded is a specious one, which in this case would mean that one should ever remain empty-headed. If reflected on, the plea will be seen to rest on a kind of philosophical irresponsibility which persistently refuses to face the implications of

freedom of thought which Philosophy insists on consists merely in recognizing an absolute compulsion laid upon it by a Reality which transcends thought.

A closer attention to the objection we are considering will reveal the full extent of the confusion on which it rests. We are told that a process of thought which is self-sustaining does not necessarily point to a Reality which is self-existent. Such an objection, if seriously maintained, would introduce a gulf between thought and Reality, which it would be impossible to bridge. It would open the door to a self-stultifying scepticism, for the affirmation that the character of thought is no index to the nature of Reality is only one step removed from the sceptical view, that we can never know what is real, since the real may, for aught we know, be different from what we think it to be.

An absolute distrust of thought is self-destructive. If so, the real nature of things must necessarily be reflected in our thinking about them. In spite of the existence of error we cannot question the validity of thought as such, for it is only by thinking that the recognition of error is itself made possible. Hence we cannot deny that it is the function of thought to reveal Reality, and further, that the character of thought is an index to the character of the Reality which it reveals.

To explain further: If thought is grounded in Reality, then it is only because Reality is in itself complete that there is a demand for completeness in thought. It is the absoluteness of the object thought that makes our thinking categorical. If the Reality in which thought is grounded were incomplete, then how could thought in grasping such a fragmentary existence achieve internal completeness? It would remain conditional and so would not even know itself to be valid. The validity of thought can only be guaranteed by that in which thought finally comes to rest, reaching which no further questions arise. There is no halfway-house between total scepticism and a belief in the Infinite. Nothing less than the Infinite can be the foundation of thought in the last resort, for what falls short of the Infinite must refer us beyond itself, and so our thought about it would remain hypothetical. It can become categorical only if the finite is grasped as forming part of a larger Whole, which is self-existent. The Infinite, therefore, is not something that we assume or take for granted, nor is it a hypothesis whose truth may or may not be verified by philosophical reflection. It is rather a necessary postulate of thought which cannot be denied without thought falling into ruins. We discover this postulate lurking in the background of our thought not by asking the question: 'does a perfect being exist?' but

its own doubts and denials. There is, I am confident, no way to solve philosophical problems except through an attempt to get at the presuppositions of philosophical thinking, or of thinking as such.

by merely attending to what we do when we think philosophically. We have to understand philosophy as a response to the pressure of the Infinite on our minds, or else there is no Philosophy but only Science.¹ But the denial of Philosophy is, as we have seen, arbitrary and self-contradictory. It is the denial of thought as such, for, as Prof. Collingwood has shown, it is only in Philosophy that we think without also refusing to think.

Our argument which shows the Infinite to be a postulate of thought is in essence the Ontological Argument in so far as it passes directly from thought to Reality; but since, as we have seen, ontological problems can best be decided through reflection on the nature and presuppositions of philosophical knowledge, it would be better to call it the Metaphysical Argument *par excellence*. Our argument differs from St. Anselm's argument in one respect. St. Anselm held that the very idea of God proves the existence of God. We have, however, first to make clear what we mean by *proving* anything in philosophy. For St. Anselm proof of the proposition: 'God exists', lies in recognizing that the denial of the proposition is involved in a contradiction. This means that an argument is cogent, if it is inwardly complete and self-sustaining, or, as we have already said, philosophical proof or thinking is categorical; but categorical thinking is an index of the pressure of the Absolute or the Infinite on our minds. Hence our argument proves the existence of God (the Perfect Being) not from the idea of God, but from the idea of philosophical proof, or, as we have shown above, by reflecting on philosophical thinking we bring the belief in God to explicit consciousness. What we have seen to be true of Philosophy is also true of the idea of God. Philosophical thinking is an indubitable fact; we prove it by attempting to deny it and in doing so we become aware of its existence. Similarly belief in God lies implicit in all minds as a necessary presupposition of all thinking. Proving God's existence consists merely in becoming aware of this implicit but universal and inescapable belief. No man, whatever he may explicitly avow or deny, can really be an atheist, just as no man can really be a Nihilist, though he may preach Nihilism from the house-tops.²

In the end we may point out that since philosophical questions are not open, our question about the existence of God must presuppose either the existence or the non-existence of God, i.e. reflection on the implications of

¹ In the end there would be no Science either, since it is the pressure of the Infinite in us which makes thinking itself possible, whether the thinking is autonomous, as in Philosophy, or restricted, as in Science.

² It is also true, though in a different sense, that no man is a theist until he has found union with God. For the state of separation is a sign that there is something in us which rejects the idea of God. This means that whether one avows or denies God, one is in a state of contradiction until God is realized.

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the question must reveal either that God exists or that God does not exist. We have tried to show positively that our question presupposes the existence of God and this conclusion is reinforced by the recognition that it is not possible to show that our question presupposes the non-existence of God, i.e. we cannot hope to show that our inquiry necessarily rests on a denial, partial or complete.

It has been said that man has many reasons, if not every reason to believe in God; but he does not have a single reason for not believing in God. This means that there is no demand of our being which is satisfied by postulating the non-existence of God, since by doing so we would only be resting on a mere negation and a mere negation cannot satisfy any demand of our being.

J. N. CHUBB

Students' Section

THE MOTHER'S TALKS

(To the Children of the Ashram)

ORDER AND DISCIPLINE

I

You must become conscious of yourself, conscious in every detail. You must organise what you call yourself around the psychic centre, the divine centre of your being so that you can possess a single, cohesive, fully conscious being: as this centre is wholly consecrated to the Divine, if all the elements are organised harmoniously around it, they too get consecrated to the Divine. Thus, when the Divine wills it, when the time comes, when the work of individualisation is complete, then the Divine permits you to let your ego melt in Him, so that you may exist for the Divine alone. But it is the Divine that takes the decision. You should have done the whole preliminary work first, become a conscious being, solely and exclusively centred around the Divine and governed by Him. When your ego has served its purpose in forming a complete individual out of you, when that work is perfectly, fully achieved, then you can say to the Divine, "Here, I am ready now; do you want me?" The Divine generally says, "Yes." Then everything is worked out, everything accomplished. You become a true instrument for the Divine's work. But the instrument must be built up first.

You are sent to school, you are asked to do exercises (both mental and physical); do you think it is just to put you to trouble? No, it is because a surrounding is absolutely necessary where you can learn to form yourself. If you tried by yourself this work of individualisation, integral formation, all alone in one corner, you would be asked nothing till you have done it; but you are not likely to do it, not a single child would do it, he would not even know how

to do it or where to begin. If a child is not taught how to live, he would not be able to live, he would not know how to do anything. The most elementary movements it is not able to do unless it is taught. Therefore if every one were to go through the whole experience, unaided, in the matter of forming his individuality, he would be dead long before he could begin to exist even. That is the utility of the experiences of others, accumulated through centuries, of those who have had the experience and who tell you, "If you want to go quick, and learn in a few years what needed centuries to learn—well, do this, do that, this way, that way, read, study, attend to your lessons at school, in the playground." Once you are on the way, you can find your own method if you are a genius. But in the beginning you must know how to stand on your legs and walk. It is not easy to go all by oneself. That is why one needs education.

28-7-1954

II

There are children who are very disorderly. They do not know how to keep things tidy. They do not know even how to keep things. They lose or spoil them. There are several reasons for it. First of all, very often it means that the child lacks sufficient vitality. The vital is not strong enough to take care of external objects. Another reason may be that he does not find interest in the physical life; his interest may lie in the direction of mental occupation, imagination or dreaming etc. Or again it may be a lack of self-control and discipline.

Anyway the result is the same. That is to say, confusion. There are children who, when they undress, throw their clothings right and left or, when they have done their task, do not know where they put their books and paper, pencil, or ink pot; it takes a lot of trouble to find them again or bring them together. In reality, all this shows an undisciplined nature, a character that is not methodical; it shows that not only in the outside but internally too the person is disorderly. There are people, perhaps considering themselves big, who even have a contempt for physical objects. But Sri Aurobindo says, people who cannot take care of things do not deserve to have them, have no right to ask for them. As I say, it shows a kind of acute egoism, much inner confusion.

There are people who live in rooms apparently clean and tidy. But open a cupboard, pull out a drawer, you will find there a battlefield: all is mixed up. They have a head too that is very much like that—a poor small head where ideas are in the same condition as the objects outside in the cupboard. They have not organised them, put them in order. You may take it as an absolute rule. I

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have never seen a man who keeps things in a disorder and yet possesses a logical brain. In him ideas like the objects are thrown together pell-mell, the most dissimilar and contradictory ideas form a jumble, they are not organised, harmonised into a higher synthesis.

So to know a man's character you need not spend your time in talking to him, you just go and open a drawer of his or open his almirah, you will know. But I may speak of someone—I shall tell you presently who it is—who used to live in the midst of heaps of books and papers. You enter into his room, you find piles of them everywhere. But if by chance, you were, to your misfortune, to displace a single sheet of paper, he would know perfectly well and would ask immediately who was it that had disturbed the papers. There were masses of things, on your entering you would not find your way. But each thing had its place—notes, letters, books, all in order—and you could not mishandle them without his knowing it. Well, it was Sri Aurobindo. In other words, you must not confuse orderliness with poverty. Naturally if you have a few things—a dozen books and a limited number of objects—it is easier to have them properly arranged. But what is to be aimed at is a logical order, a conscious intelligent order among a multiplicity of objects. That requires a capacity for organisation. It is a capacity which every one must acquire and possess, unless of course you are physically disabled—when one is ill or sickly or maimed and has not the required strength: even then there is a limit. I know of sick people who could tell you: “Open me that drawer, you will find on the right or on the left or at the bottom such and such a thing.” They could not themselves move and handle the things but knew where they were. Apart from such cases, the ideal must be one of order, organisation, like that of a library for example, where you have thousands and thousands of books that are yet all arranged, classified, docketed and you have only to name a title and in a few minutes the book is in your hand. Of course, it is not the work of a single person; even then, the pattern is there as an example to follow.

You too must organise your affairs in the same way. You need not follow another's method or system. You have your own rule, that which is convenient and true for you—but it must be well planned and properly laid out.

NOLINI KANTA GUPTA

MY BOYHOOD UNDER SRI AUROBINDO

THE VITAL BEING

January—March, 1934

SELF: I am again feeling depressed; I can't understand the reason for it.

SRI AUROBINDO: Often waves of depression come from the general Nature—the mind finds out inner or external reasons for them when there are none—That may be the reason why the reasons are not clear. On the other hand it may be due to some part of the being getting discouraged or fatigued or unwilling to follow the movement either of work or sadhana. If it is something in the vital being, it may hide itself so as not to be exposed or cleared; if a part of the physical, it may be simply dumb and obscure unable to express itself. Finally it may come up from the subconscious. These are various cases in which there is what seems a causeless depression. One has to see for oneself which it is.

SELF: How am I to maintain the Mother's inner contact when I am in a prolonged state of depression?

SRI AUROBINDO: If you want the Mother's contact always, you must get rid of depression and the mental imaginations that bring it. Nothing comes more in the way than that.

SELF: Are we Sadhaks generally quiet while aspiring?

SRI AUROBINDO: All are not. Many are very unquiet and if there is no immediate fulfilment, fall into despair.

SELF: When difficulties like depression, despair, dullness etc. come up, what should be our attitude?

SRI AUROBINDO: Dismiss them altogether, realising that their causes are unreal and depend on the suggestions of the vital.

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SELF: During my prolonged state of depression, were there really some hostile forces at work?

SRI AUROBINDO: Without the hostile forces it would not have been such an exaggerated and obsessing movement.

SELF: Why does our vital being desire outer and superficial things from the Mother instead of Ananda, Light, Force?

SRI AUROBINDO: It is the small physical vital that desires and wants to deal in the same way with these things as it did with the outward desires. It is not so easy for it to open to invisible things—that is more easy for the higher vital.

SELF: What is the nature of the higher vital?

SRI AUROBINDO: Emotion, the larger Desires, creative or executive life forces.

SELF: The mind has its divine equivalent above: the Supermind. What is the equivalent of the vital?

SRI AUROBINDO: Mind — Supermind
Emotional being (heart)— Ananda
Vital — Tapas
Matter — Sat

These are correspondences—but the Supermind is a sufficient instrument for divinising the vital.

SELF: But I do not understand the meaning of Tapas.

SRI AUROBINDO: Chit Tapas—the second plane of the Divine Consciousness.

SELF: We usually receive a host of suggestions, but our vital responds to only a few. There must be some reason for this.

SRI AUROBINDO: Yes, there is either in the vital a willingness to accept and respond or else a habit which makes it respond whether it wants it or not.

SELF: My vital is very much affected by all sorts of things, good and bad.

SRI AUROBINDO: It is an excessive vital sensitiveness which sometimes comes with a growing openness in the consciousness. It has to be rejected. The consciousness must be open to the right things, but not to the wrong ones.

SELF: I do not know what exactly you mean here by the right or wrong things. If for example some one insults me for a fault not committed by me, is it wrong for me to feel insulted?

SRI AUROBINDO: If feeling insulted is to be considered the right thing, then there is no use in doing Yoga. Yoga is based on equanimity, not on the ordinary vital reactions.

SELF: How should we keep ourselves free of the feeling of jealousy?

SRI AUROBINDO: If there is no claim or sense of possession, or desire of possession there can be no ground for jealousy.

SELF: While reading your letter on "The Valley of the False Glimmer", I felt that we were apt to put too much emphasis on our wrong conditions, which is a mistake.

SRI AUROBINDO: Yes, if you are always stressing on the wrong condition, it becomes worse.

SELF: You once spoke of two kinds of causes—a psychological cause and a rational one. Will you please tell me when depression can be attributed to the former and when to the latter?

SRI AUROBINDO: If you imagine that the Mother is displeased because she does not do what you would like her to do and begin to be depressed and sorrowful, the psychological cause is the vital, its egoism, its demand, its turn for being miserable. If you had been smoking and the Mother were really displeased, that would be a rational cause.

SELF: Why does our vital being sometimes love to be miserable even when its desires are satisfied?

SRI AUROBINDO: It is its nature to get depressed and miserable. Something in it enjoys the play of it, as one enjoys a drama.

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SELF: In order that our ego may demand nothing but give itself up to the Mother, is it to be rejected or to be transformed?

SRI AUROBINDO: The ego has to be thrown out—it is the true vital being that gives itself to the Mother.

SELF: Where do you locate the true vital being?

SRI AUROBINDO: It is in the inner being, like the psychic—not on the surface.

SELF: When the vital aspires, the aspiration becomes so intense that I feel as if it would break the being. Is this the effect of the true vital's activity?

SRI AUROBINDO: If it is the true vital, there is no feeling of breaking the being. That is a rajasic mixture.

SELF: When the vital aspires, are its aspirations always intense and powerful?

SRI AUROBINDO: Not always—but the participation of the vital does usually help to bring a greater power and intensity.

SELF: It seems my vital is getting empty of ordinary movements and growing tranquil and pure.

SRI AUROBINDO: It is under the psychic influence.

NAGIN DOSHI

AS I LOOK BACK

As I look back on the last several years, what is it that I remember? What is it that stands out like a point of light, a high pinnacle towering over all the lesser hills?

I have seen lofty mountains and deep ravines. Streams gushing forth midst rocky boulders and bubbling foam-white with happiness. Vast, rolling meadows with sheep grazing and cattle placidly content. A boy on way to school—frisking like a young lamb. An old woman collecting fire-wood on dry stony ground, back bent with the weight of heavy years. I have watched the sun come up red in a blue sky, waves of trembling delight shimmering on the sea. The glorious palette of the setting sun—the sky a study in rich colour. I have stood amidst the hum of a busy city; I have stolen hurriedly through traffic jams, watched the brilliant lights trying to captivate. I have joined in the merry company of men and women, talked and laughed, loved and wept. Personal tragedies have come bringing with them a train of tears. Personal comedies too—a brief transience of smiles.

Is it all this that I remember as I look back on what has been? No, I am afraid not. The mountains merge into the sky and are no more. The streams are distant, far distant. The boy, the old woman—nothing exists. Gone are the bright lights that twinkled on the streets, gone the faces of men and women that formed erstwhile my company. They fade into the background of an alien mass.

What is it that is left? What are the landmarks by which I know that the passing years have been at all? It is that hour on the balcony when I poured out my heart to God. That spot on the hill where I prayed to Him, longed for Him so ardently. That lonely time in the night when I cried to Him for love and company. That little moment in the fields when His presence was deep within my heart. That turn of the road that revealed His smile in the air and brought me closer to Him. That stretch of land over which I walked with Him and talked to Him.

These are the things that I remember as I look back.

ASTER

AN INVITATION FROM THE GODS

(A DREAM-VISION)

An invitation was sent to me from the land of Gods and Goddesses to attend a dramatic performance by them. The only route was by sea. I reached the shore accompanied by a sadhaka, who had come to see me off. There was no boat to carry me. As for swimming, I had never learnt it. That sadhaka and the shore soon disappeared in a haze the moment I was on the sea. Puzzled I looked down and up to find the means of making the trip. The Beyond spoke to me through the sky: "Stand on the water and with thy two hands hold on to the sky. Then the heavens will carry thee through." Accordingly, I extended my physical arms upwards and the luminous sky began to lead me onwards. I do not know whether I should call it a sailing or a gliding journey. For, though my feet were moving on (and not over) the water the motion received from the sky through the arms was greater than of running.

The sea was full of light. I was in its middle where the wavelets were so gracefully in motion that my whole body remained thrilled throughout. After some time, I suddenly happened to look into the far-off space in front of me. I was still quite away from my destination. The horizon through its fine transparency revealed, almost secretly, the Heaven to which I had been invited. I saw that the drama had already begun. So they could not wait for their earthly guest! Vaguely I could discern that the stage was more or less on our own pattern, only much bigger in size. The fundamental difference lay, however, in the atmosphere, in the acting; as if the actors were rehearsing what was to be played out later on the earth. The Gods and Goddesses appeared outwardly just like human beings, but in fact they were types representing humanity. Their clothes were airy, as though made of clouds, and they were worn very artistically. The colours were extremely beautiful and yet simple; they did not hide the wearers' graceful and luminous bodies, rather they aided them with an expressive combination. At times certain symbolic gestures were shown by the movements of the clothes only.

The drama was going on perpetually. The action was fast. Scene after scene changed but there was no sign of fatigue. The actors' bodies possessed a unique poise and balance in action. Grace was never absent even from their tumultuous gestures.

AN INVITATION FROM THE GODS

Each godhead was playing out his or her part individually like any actor of the earth. Yet there seemed to be a vaster and more impersonal kind of consciousness supporting and sustaining all of them. That Force came perhaps from the last background curtain of orange colour.

Whatever the part taken up, it was played out naturally—as if it formed an event of their real life and not of a drama. That made the show so vivid and absorbing that I totally forgot that I was still walking on the naked sea with only the sky above. The Gods and Goddesses never suspected that their invitee was secretly watching their play without even entering into their kingdom.

NAGIN DOSHI

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