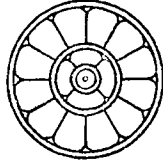


MOTHER INDIA

MARCH 1959

Price : Re. 1.



Lord, Thou hast willed, and I execute.

A new light breaks upon the earth,

A new world is born.

The things that were promised are fulfilled.



MOTHER INDIA

MONTHLY REVIEW OF CULTURE

Vol. XI

No. 2

"Great is Truth and it shall prevail"

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WORDS OF THE MOTHER

Ce n'est pas ce que tu fais qui importe, mais la manière de le faire et la conscience que tu y mets. Souviens-toi sans cesse du Divin et tout ce que tu feras exprimera la Présence Divine. Quand tu consacres au Divin toutes tes actions, il n'y aura plus d'activités supérieures ou inférieures, toutes ont une importance égale : celle que leur confère la consécration.

1949.



It is not what you do that matters, but the way you do it and the consciousness you put into it. Remember the Divine unceasingly, and all that you do will express the Divine Presence. When you consecrate all your actions to the Divine, there will no longer be any higher or lower activities, all will have an equal importance : that conferred on them by the consecration.

1949.

THE MESSAGE OF FEBRUARY 21, 1959

IN the mind which is a creator of differential contradictions there is supposed to be a perpetual incompatibility between the transcendent and the cosmic states of the Divine—as also between the Personal and Impersonal, the One and the Many. The supramental consciousness, on the other hand, does not raise these problems, for there the way of experience of the mental Ignorance is abolished and the basis of all things is an indefeasible unity—whatever expression is there cannot diminish or contradict this unity (which is essential and not numerical) but lives in it and by it, never losing the hold on the supra-cosmic Reality which it expresses. This difference between Supermind and mind is difficult to explain fully to the mind, for it contradicts the logic of the mind and substitutes a way of knowing which is *swayamprakasha** and rooted in a knowledge by identity of which the mind at its best can only grasp a thin reflection or a shadow. But it makes an immense difference in the possibilities of consciousness, a difference which one can only realise, not by thought, but by experience.

SRI AUROBINDO

* Self-revealing

ANIMAL-SACRIFICE, SELF-SACRIFICE, SPIRITUAL SACRIFICE

(From Nirodbaran's Correspondence with Sri Aurobindo)

4-10-1935

MYSELF : Is there any truth behind animal sacrifices to Kali ?

SRI AUROBINDO : If animal sacrifices are to be made they may just as well be made to Kali as to one's stomach—the Europeans who object to it have no *locus standi*.

MYSELF : Is the killing of mosquitoes, bugs, snakes and scorpions permissible for self-protection ?

SRI AUROBINDO : Certainly. One might just as well object to the killing of germs by fumigation or otherwise.

MYSELF : What about the sacrifice of harmless animals to Kali ?

SRI AUROBINDO : Useless and therefore inadvisable. External sacrifices of this kind have no longer any meaning—as so many saints have said, sacrifice ego, anger, lust etc. to Kali, not goats or cocks.

How does the Divine benefit by it ? Very hungry, I suppose—would like a nice goat-chop ?

MYSELF : I wonder if you know that some Sharma has gone on hunger-strike to stop the sacrifices at Calcutta. Tagore supports him.

SRI AUROBINDO : Of course, I know. But he objects to animal sacrifice; why does he make a goat offering of himself to Kali ? Is human sacrifice better than animal sacrifice ?

MYSELF : The argument is : what does the loss of one life matter if by it other lives can be saved ?

SRI AUROBINDO : I know the South African saying "How glorious if the whole world were to destroy itself to save the life of a single mosquito." I used always to wonder what would become of the poor mosquito if the world were destroyed ? It seemed to my poor common sense that it would perish also in the glorious holocaust.

17-10-1935

MOTHER INDIA

Self-sacrifice for the country's sake has certainly a moral value. The "terrorism" brings in another element and assimilates it to the act of a fighter, less sattvic and more rajasic in its nature. I am not sure that I would be willing to call that a sacrifice in the moral or sattvic sense. In Bhishma's case the element of sacrifice came not in fighting and killing for the sake of Dhritarashtra but in his knowing that he must die and accepting it for his ideal of loyalty. Of course, you may say that every man who risks his life does an act of sacrifice, but then we come back to very primitive ideas. I take the word in S's letter in a less outward sense, otherwise my answer might have been different.

MYSELF : Recently an ignorant fanatic killed somebody whom he took to be irreverent to his Teacher. He was in turn killed by the Court. Did he make a sacrifice of his life for a noble cause ?

SRI AUROBINDO : It seems to me that he made the sacrifice of another's life and not his own. In that way a murderer can also be said to make a sacrifice of his life to his desires or his passions, for he risks the gallows. Note that the fanatic tried to escape the gallows. Even taking it that he gave his life, it was for a reward, Paradise. His act is therefore at best equivalent to that of a soldier killing and getting killed. It cannot be called sacrifice, except in the old sense of the word, when you killed a cow or a goat on an altar to get religious merit. For the essence of this kind of act of fanaticism is, admittedly, the killing of the unbeliever and not the giving of your own life. Would you call it self-sacrifice if you offered a goat at Kalighat ? It would be for the goat if it assented to the affair, but for yourself ? Of course there is the price of the goat—you might pride yourself on that sacrifice. There is nothing noble besides in fanaticism—there is no nobility of motive, though there may be a fierce enthusiasm of motive. Religious fanaticism is something psychologically low-born and ignorant and usually in its action fierce, cruel and base. Religious ardour like that of the martyr who sacrifices himself only is a different thing.

MYSELF : It seems difficult to understand when the Mother says that spiritual sacrifice is joyful.

SRI AUROBINDO : She was speaking of the true spiritual sacrifice, not the bringing of an unwilling heart to the altar.

MYSELF : It seems to me that pain and struggle are bound to be there at the beginning of spiritual sacrifice by one who has tasted the joys of life.

SRI AUROBINDO : It simply means that your sacrifice is still mental and has not yet become spiritual in its character. When your vital being consents to give up its desires and enjoyments, when it offers itself to the Divine, then the

ANIMAL-SACRIFICE, SELF-SACRIFICE, SPIRITUAL SACRIFICE

Yajna will have begun. What I meant was that the European sense of the word is not the sense of the word "Yajna" or the sense of "sacrifice" in such phrases as "the sacrifice of works". It doesn't mean that you give up all works for the sake of the Divine—for then there would be no sacrifice of works at all. Similarly the sacrifice of knowledge doesn't mean that you painfully and resolutely make yourself a fool for the sake of the Lord. Sacrifice means an inner offering to the Divine and the real spiritual sacrifice is a very joyful thing. Otherwise one is only trying to make oneself fit and has not yet begun the real Yajna. It is because your mind is struggling with your vital, the unwilling animal and asking it to allow itself to be immolated that there is the pain and struggle. If the spiritual will (or psychic) were more in the front then you would not be lamenting over the loss of the ghee and butter and curds thrown into the Fire or trying to have a last lick at it before casting it. The only difficulty would be about bringing down the gods fully enough (a progressive labour), not about lamentations over the ghee. By the way, do you think that the Mother or myself or others who have taken up the spiritual life had not enjoyed life and that it is therefore that the Mother was able to speak of a joyous sacrifice to the Divine as a true spirit of spiritual sacrifice ? Or do you think we spent the preliminary stages in longings for the lost fleshpots of Egypt and that it was only later on we felt the joy of the spiritual sacrifice ? Of course we did not; we and many others had no difficulty on the score of giving up anything we thought necessary to give up and no hankerings afterwards. Your rule is as usual a stiff rule that does not at all apply generally.

MYSELF : You always paralyse me by bringing in Mother and yourself, non-humans as examples to humans !

SRI AUROBINDO : All this about human and non-human is sheer rubbish, your usual red herring across the path; you use it in order to argue that our knowledge and experience are of no practical value because they apply to us alone and cannot apply to or help human beings. As if no human beings ever had a clear mind and strong will able to make a resolution and carry it out without vital struggles and repinings. There are thousands who have done so. Even most ordinary men can do it when the passion for a cause seizes them. I have seen that in hundreds during the Swadeshi times. And do you think none who were human ever had conquered passion for the Divine ?

12-7-1937

Sacrifice depends on the inner attitude. If one has nothing outward to sacrifice one has always oneself to give.

PROBLEMS OF HARMONISATION

(From Nirodbaran's Correspondence with Sri Aurobindo)

SRI AUROBINDO : Every man has a double nature except those who are born (not unborn) Asuras, Rakshasas, Pisachas and even they have a psychic being concealed somewhere by virtue of their latent humanity. But a double being (or a double nature in the special sense) refers to those who have two sharply contrasted parts of their being without as yet such a linking control over them. Sometimes they are all for the heights and then they are quite all right—sometimes all for the abysses and then they care nothing for the heights, even sneer or rail at them and give full rein to the lower man. Or they substitute for the heights a smoky volcano summit in the abyss. These are extreme examples, but others while they do not go so far, yet are now one thing, now just the opposite. If they can convert the lower fellow or discover the central being in themselves, then a true harmonious whole can be created.

4-6-1936

MYSELF : One good news : I find now three mules—mules, mind you, not horses—are trying to draw me on: (1) meditation, (2) silence (not of mind but of the buccal cavity), (3) poetry.

SRI AUROBINDO : Well, mules are very useful animals. When Badoglio's motor lorries broke down, he bought 20,000 mules (I won't swear to the exact number) and they did the trick. You have only three mules and not 20,000—but perhaps 3 will serve.

MYSELF : The buccal silence I can keep out from clashing with the other two. But the collision between meditation and poetry is inevitable unless I favour one of them.

SRI AUROBINDO : There are three ways of meeting that situation. (1) say "Yes, yes" to both partners, but that may create trouble afterwards, (2) be cryptic-cystic in your answers, so that neither will be sure what you mean, (3) silence with an occasional profound "...Ah, hum. Yes, eh!" "Ah, hum" always sounds unfathomable depths—and if "Yes" is too positive "eh" tones it down and corrects it. You have not enough worldly wisdom.

PROBLEMS OF HARMONISATION

No need to harmonise by any set arrangement—only keep up the concentration. One hour of packed concentration or even a few minutes can do as much as three hours less packed. Do you say yours is not packed? Well, striped, streaked, spotted, dotted or whatever it may be.

5-12-1935

MYSELF : I am attempting short stories—just to open my grey matter if possible, though I doubt very much. Again doubt ! Yes, sir, doubt in every blessed nook and corner.

SRI AUROBINDO : You must have been St. Thomas in a past life, also Hamlet, an Academic philosopher, and several other things.

MYSELF : Three sisters are dancing in me—the urge to write short stories, the urge to write poetry and the urge to meditate. Is there any possibility of realising their rhythms in the near future ?

SRI AUROBINDO : Every possibility if you will cease to Hamletise and go straight or go baldheaded for the thing to be done when there is a chance.

6-12-1935

SRI AUROBINDO : Lucky man ! Ample time, sir, ample time, both to realise the Brahman and to write another *Iliad* or *Nirodiad*.

Good Lord ! What can one write in 1 or 1 and $\frac{1}{2}$ hours ? If I could only get that time for immortal productions every day ! Why in another three years *Savitri* and *Iliad* and I don't know how much more would be all rewritten, finished, resplendently complete.

Well, but what I mean is to stop this profitless debate in your stomach and do what you have to do. When you are moved to concentrate, concentrate—when you are moved to cosmicise chaos, cosmicise away. And don't waste time in remorse for having done either. Remorse is a damned useless affair, very depressing, defertilising etc. Even if you murder somebody or, what is worse, write lines which amount to a murder of the Muse, remorse is out of place. In the first case, the useful thing to do is to bury the corpse and in the second to seek the capacious arms of the W.P.B. for your misdeed or try to cover it up by doing better.

POETIC QUALITIES

(From Nirodbaran's Correspondence with Sri Aurobindo)

| | | My life is veiled in a sleep of light,
| | | A hush that nothing breaks;
| | | The world before my inward sight
| | | Into pure beauty wakes.

| | | Life that is deep and wonder-vast,
| | | Lost in a breath of sound;
| | | The bubbling shadows have been cast
| | | From its heart's timeless round.

| | | In its lulled silver stream now shines
| | | A lustrous smile of God
| | | Whose brilliantly curved outlines,
| | | Flashing on the memory-shot

| | | Caverns of slumbering earth, there bring
| | | A glow of the Infinite,
| | | While my soul's diamond voices wing
| | | Into a heaven of light.

30-3-1938

MYSELF : Guru, I fear this is only a sprat !

SRI AUROBINDO : It is not a sprat, sir; it is a goldfish. You seem to be weak in poetical zoology. It is perfect, except for the one fault you have detected. The only alterations (except the "pure") I find needful, are meant to obviate that defect, by going back to "my", so connecting the first and last lines (also aided by the repetition of Light) and making the rest appear as closely connected with it. Like that it makes a very well built and finely inspired poem. If you can produce more sprats like that, there will be much wealth in your fisheries. It is much better than the other recent ones, except the stress poem—nothing decorative,—all there !

31-3-1938

POETIC QUALITIES

MYSELF : About yesterday's poem, I am still "weak" in finding the "gold" you found in my fish. I don't see what beauty is there to make you mark certain lines thrice—e.g. "Into a heaven of light", which is very simple, ordinary sort of line, I should say. I admit it is well built and devoid of decoration, but to see it as you see it—well, could you explain a bit ? But I can increase this sort of "wealth" if you are at my back !

SRI AUROBINDO : There is probably a defect in your solar plexus which makes it refuse to thrill unless it receives a strong punch from poetry—an ornamental, romantic or pathetic punch. But there is also a poetry which expresses things with an absolute truth but without effort, simply and easily, without a word in excess or any laying on of colour, only just the necessary. That kind of achievement is considered as among the greatest things poetry can do. The three lines are put in yesterday's poem wherever that happened.

A phrase, word or line may be quite simple and ordinary and yet taken with another phrase, line or word become the perfect thing. If you look you will see that my 3 lines are put against the *two* last lines taken together and not this one only by itself. So taken they express with perfect felicity something that can be seen or felt in spiritual experience. The same reason for the other three line encomiums. E.g. A line like "Life that is deep and wonder-vast" has what I have called the inevitable quality, with a perfect simplicity and straightforwardness it expresses something in a definitive and perfect way that cannot be bettered; so does "Lost in a breath of sound," with less simplicity but with the same inevitability. The two lines that follow are very fine but they have to labour more to express what they want and express it less absolutely—still it does so much that it gets 2 lines, but not three. The same distinction applies to the next two lines "In the lulled silver stream" etc. and the four that follow. I don't mean that highly coloured poetry cannot be absolutely inevitable, it can e.g., Shakespeare's "In cradle of the rude imperious surge" and many others. But most of the highly coloured poetry attracts too much attention to the colour and its brilliances so that the thing in itself is less felt than the magnificence of its dress. All kinds are legitimate in poetry. I only wanted to point out that poetry can be great or perfect even if it uses simple or ordinary expressions e.g., Dante simply says "In His will is our peace" and in writing that in Italian produces one of the greatest lines in all poetic literature.

INTEGRALITY

SRI AUROBINDO

(Translated by Niranjan from the original Bengali in "Vividha Rachana")

You have stepped on to the path of the integral Yoga. Try to fathom the meaning and the aim of the integral Yoga before you advance. He who has the noble aspiration of attaining the high summit of realisation should know thoroughly these two things : the aim and the path. Of the path I shall speak later on. First it is necessary to draw before your eyes, in bold outline, the complete picture of the aim.

What is the meaning of integrality ? Integrality is the image of the Divine being, the dharma of the Divine nature. Man is incomplete, striving after and evolving towards the fullness and moving in the flow of gradual manifestation of the Self. Integrality is his destination; man is only a half-disclosed form of the Divine, that is why he is travelling towards the Divine integrality. In this human bud hides the fullness of the Divine lotus, and it is the endeavour of Nature to bring it into blossom gradually and slowly. In the practice of the Yoga, the Yoga-shakti begins to open it at a great speed, with a lightning rapidity. That which people call full manhood—mental progress, ethical purity, beautiful development of the faculties of mind, strength of character, vital force, physical health—is not the Divine integrality. It is only the fullness of a partial dharma of Nature. The real indivisible integrality can only come from the integrality of the Self, from the integrality of the Supramental Force beyond the mind, because the indivisible Self is the real Purusha and the Purusha in mind, life or body is only a partial outward and debased play of the Supermind. The real integrality can only come when the mind is transformed into the Supermind. By the Supramental Force, the Self has created the universe and regulated it; by the Supramental Force, it raises the part to the Whole. The Self in man is concealed behind the veil of mind. It can be seen when this veil is removed. The power of the Self can feel in the mind the half-revealed, half-hidden, diminished form and play. Only when the Supramental Force unfolds itself, can the Self fully emerge.

SRI AUROBINDO'S RELICS FROM PONDICHERRY TO BENGAL

“EVEN if there is much darkness—and this world is full of it and the physical nature of man also—yet a ray of the true Light can prevail eventually against a tenfold darkness. Believe that and cleave to it always.”

SRI AUROBINDO

On February 12, 1959, at 2 P.M., just three hours after distributing the above words, in facsimile, of Sri Aurobindo—words which spontaneously call to mind the Mother's own :

“The transformation is going to be : nothing will ever stop it, nothing will frustrate the decree of the Omnipotent,”

the Mother gave to Bengal through Gobindalal Goswami, Rector, Bangabani, Navadwip, the sacred Relics of Sri Aurobindo for enshrinement on February 21, 1959, the Mother's 81st birthday, in the specially-created temple forming integral part of Bangabani, a big many-faceted educational institution, whose central aim is to follow the integral ideals of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother.

The Mother had already fixed upon the 12th of February, the Saraswati Puja Day, for her gift of the Relics. At 2 p.m., she called—along with some of the sadhaks of the Ashram—Gobindalal and his party, including Birendramohan Sen of Calcutta whose blue-print and design of the temple the Mother had earlier approved as “excellent”.

The Relics consisted of three packets, one of hair and two of nails—of the hands and of the feet—pared on August 15, 1950. The Mother, in the presence of the persons assembled, put them first in a small gold-brocade bag which she closed then and there with a few stitches. The bag was put in a gold casket, a cube each side of which was exactly 1 inch square, that is to say, a perfect one-inch cube. The gold casket was put in a silver one, the silver in a sandalwood one, the sandalwood box in a rosewood one. Each of the caskets bears in relief on one side Sri Aurobindo's symbol. The gold casket has a golden symbol, the silver a silver symbol ; the symbol on the sandalwood box is made of an alloy of five metals and that on the rosewood one is of silver.

The four caskets were wrapped in a handkerchief used by Sri Aurobindo, then again tied in a square silk kerchief of red colour. This in its turn was

put in a plastic bag which was sealed on the spot. The Mother then placed the whole packet in a granite box that had been prepared for the purpose and the box was finally sealed with cement.

The four caskets represent different planes of consciousness : gold symbolises the Supermind, silver the Spirit, sandalwood the Overmind and rose-wood Matter.

By the way, the symbol consists of two intersecting equilateral triangles with their apexes pointing above and below. "The descending triangle represents Sat-Chit-Ananda. The ascending triangle represents the aspiring answer from matter, under the form of life, light and love. The junction of both (the central square) is the perfect manifestation having at its centre the Avatar of the Supreme (the lotus). The water (inside the square) represents the multiplicity, the creation."

"The red lotus symbolises Sri Aurobindo's consciousness and the cube the Supramental Truth he came to realise. The four petals of the lotus signify the four principal powers of his creative energy and the twelve outer petals represent the manifested powers working for perfection."

While the Mother was arranging the relics one sadhak chanted the mantra : 'Sri Aravindaḥ śaraṇam mama', 'Sri Aurobindo my Refuge'.

Immediately after this simple but significant ceremony, as the party came down from the Mother's rooms the photographers from Calcutta took the first film.

Then through the courtyard, full of Ashramites and visitors all standing in silent reverence, Gobindalal and his group carried the sacred box to the motor car waiting outside the Ashram Gate. The car was driven by a sadhak of the Ashram, followed by two other cars carrying the rest of the party. In the meanwhile two sadhak-artists had gone to Madras to decorate the reserved compartment in the Calcutta Mail starting from Madras at 7 P.M. The party arrived at Madras Central at about 5.

The beautifully decorated inside of the compartment of the train, filled with the fragrance of flowers and incense and with the words SRI AUROBINDO'S RELICS shining across the top of the door on both sides, presented an inspiring picture.

A fairly large group of Sri Aurobindo's devotees and admirers in Madras came up and offered their homage and the train steamed off the platform.

SISIR KUMAR MITRA

THE WORLD-WORK OF SRI AUROBINDO

(Presidential Address by A. B. Purani at the Ceremony of Enshrining Sri Aurobindo's Relics at Navadwip, Bengal)

It is but meet that Navadwip, the birth place of Sri Chaitanya Maha Prabhu and a centre of Shakti sadhana in old times, should have been chosen as the first place in Bengal for enshrining the sacred relics of him who gave a new Light not only to Bengal and India but to the whole world. Self-surrender to the Divine is an important element in Sri Chaitanya's path of Bhakti : self-surrender is an indispensable process in Sri Aurobindo's Purna Yoga. I congratulate the workers of the Bangabani Institute.

I have come to participate in the sacred ceremony of the installation of these relics, but so many things that have happened during the last fifty years crowd in my mind that I find myself unable to convey all that the occasion demands. So many things of supreme significance not only to myself but to India and to the whole world have happened that it is difficult for me to make up my mind to speak. I would prefer to pray for and invoke the dynamic Presence of Him whose sacred relics are here, and remain silent.

But as I am expected to say something I would address a few words of prayer to Him on behalf of all of us.

Lord ! I know you have not left the earth-atmosphere because the earth needs you and will always need you.

You took your birth this time in Bengal and the parents gave you the name "Aurobindo", the first time such a name was given in this province. It was unconsciously symbolic of the blooming of the "lotus of humanity" in its full glory and also of the opening of all the lotuses of the human consciousness to the Divine. Yours was not an ordinary insignificant human birth, but, as the Mother has said, "an eternal birth in the history of the cosmos", it is the birth of the dynamic divine consciousness as a permanent part of earth-consciousness.

Your early training took place in England where in the midst of hard external conditions you acquired all that was precious in the heritage of ancient Greece and modern Europe. You returned to India with the cultural riches of Europe and the unsullied spirit of India in your heart burning with the fire of patriotism.

It was a great risk to be a nationalist in those nineties when you, with very

few others, sounded the bugle call of complete political independence for India. In the prevailing confusion, diffidence and poverty of political thought, you instilled the great truth that what counts in a great cause is not external circumstances and the mind's calculations, but the power of faith,—the power to be faithful to the call of the soul. It is that that conquers. To the people of Bengal and India who were then steeped in *tamas* you restored the confidence with those resounding words : “We are no ordinary race,—we have brains, we have courage, we have an infinite and various national capacity.”

As for Bengal, the land of your birth, you said in 1908 that “Bengal is learning to believe !” “There was one thing about the Bengalee,” you declared, “he lived what he believed.” “The Bengalee has the faculty of belief.” And you explained : “Belief is not a mere intellectual process, belief is not a mere persuasion of the mind,—belief is from God.”

I do hope modern Bengal, in spite of her difficulties, justifies the high estimate you gave of her, or she will try, at any rate, to deserve it.

Your conception of Bharata-Mata, the India of your dream, deserves to be enshrined in the heart of every Indian,—more so after India has become free. India to you was not something merely material, a land, some fields, some mountains and rivers,—I may add, not some rich mines even; she was to you the Mother whom you worshipped and adored. This is how you wrote about her :

अन्य लोके स्वदेशके एकटा जड पदार्थ, कतगुलो माठ, क्षेत्र, वन, पर्वत, नदी बलिया जाने,
आमि स्वदेशके मा बलिया जानि, भक्ति करि, पूजा करि ।

Bharata-mata is the daughter of the Divine Mother, she is a manifestation of the Supreme Mother.

With this vision of Mother India you entered the struggle for freedom and introduced self-help and passive resistance,—self-sacrifice, unity and organisation in the working of the Congress. You trod that path of suffering, sacrifice and courage, and taught the young to tread it smilingly. The message you gave about India to the students of the first National College stands even today as a source of inspiration to all young men : “Work,” you said, “that she may prosper. Suffer that she may rejoice.”

But your most important contribution was the introduction of a living spiritual element in our national movement. You taught that “nationalism is a religion by which we are trying to realise God in the nation, in our fellow-countrymen.” I do hope that leaders of free India will ponder over and find guidance in it. You transferred your living faith in the divine guidance, in part, to many workers in the national movement when you declared : “It is God who

has entered the race and is raising India.” —“India was not awaking by mere human strength.” So great and living was your faith in the inevitability of India’s rise that you assured the people that “there is only one Force, and for that Force (to work) I am not necessary, you are not necessary, he is not necessary. God is doing everything.” Even at Jhalakati in 1909 you gave the same assurance, when the famous seven deportations had taken place : “Great as he is, Aswini Kumar Dutt is not the leader of this movement, Tilak is not the leader —God is the leader.” And you assured the people : “God is within you”... “an immortal Power is working in you.”

And you also explained to us why God was raising this nation : “Something must come from you which is to save the world.” Let free India attend to the importance of this guidance and try to live up to it.

You also clarified what that “something” was : “That something is what the ancient Rishis knew and revealed.” You put to Indians, fifty years ago, a crucial question which every Indian can put to himself today and answer : “Have you realised that you are merely instruments of God ?” They were asked to realise this instrumentality, not to follow personal, party or national ego but “to save the Light, to save the spirit of India from lasting obscurity and debasement.”

And your love for India was no narrow patriotism or collective ambition; your patriotism, even in those days of political subjection, widened out “beyond the unity of the nation and envisaged the ultimate unity of mankind”. “But it was the unity of brothers, equals and freemen” that you preached, not of masters and slaves or dependents.

The now-famous solitary cell of your detention in the Alipore Jail you turned into a cave of your sadhana which culminated in that basic realisation of the presence of Narayana everywhere. After acquittal at the trial you devoted yourself entirely to sadhana under divine guidance. You gave an inspired expression to your realisation at Uttarpara,—the realisation that became the basis for your future spiritual edifice. It was clear that the Divine to you was not something merely other-worldly, supracosmic and remote,—not a static consciousness indifferent to the universe, but an Omnipresent Reality dynamic at every moment of human time. You gave to the modern world the assurance—even in these hard days when man lives in his externalised consciousness, in the midst of apparently triumphant materialism—that man, irrespective of his religion, nationality or sex, can put his inmost being and even his external life into contact with the Divine Presence and create an entirely new life on earth for himself.

The seed of this colossal spiritual transformation was contained in your speeches even in 1908 and 1909, delivered at Bombay and Jhalakati respectively.

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Subsequently, being assured by the Supreme of the ultimate triumph of the movement for the political freedom of India you devoted your energies, for forty long years, under a supreme guidance, to the tremendous task of sounding the ocean of yogic experiences, with all its profundities and crests of spiritual life. You brought forth from it for the modern world the grand, living and the only true synthesis of human culture. The freedom of India did come and, symbolically, it came on your auspicious birthday reminding India of her true mission among the nations of the world.

An event of crucial and symbolic importance to the whole of humanity was the coming of the Mother to join you at Pondicherry in the great mission, —in solving the problem of man's destiny on earth. On 24th November, 1926, the descent of the Higher Consciousness took place which made available to humanity a dynamic spiritual Power. Since 1926—after the Ashram had been organised—thousands in India and outside have bathed in the flood of the Light and the Grace. Thousands are bathing in it every day. The work of building up a new life on earth with the help and under the protecting wing of that Power has already begun; and Bengal, the province of your birth, has long been feeling the call to give a concrete form to her aspiration to participate in the new life. Her aspiration has taken shape today and I pray that with your blessings it may blossom and expand and bear fruit. All those who feel attracted to the Great Truth, which you and the Mother have brought for humanity, know that it is not a religion that you have brought for man, it is a new view of life and a new way of life.

This view and this way, with its dynamic spirituality which embraces all the fields of life, is the dire necessity of the present times. The Divine, who is "subtler than the subtle, and greater than the greatest," has put in the hands of ignorant humanity an unlimited source of material energy, the power hidden in the atom. The possession of this atom-power gives to man two alternatives : either to change willingly or to be unwillingly driven to destruction, man can transform his nature or annihilate himself. Man is also trying to overcome the limits of outer space without overcoming the limitations of his consciousness. It would be a great technical triumph, no doubt, if man reached the moon. But what good would it be if he reached the moon, or even Venus, in the present state of his ignorant nature ? Man seems on the point of being overcome by his own achievements.

At this critical time of history, India stands at the cross-roads. She has embarked upon a huge programme of economic reconstruction, a programme befitting her greatness. We do hope her efforts to banish poverty from the land will be crowned with success. Let more food, more goods and, with many other things, let more steel be produced; for all that is necessary. But in

the process of material production the higher human values should not suffer. Let us not produce steel at the expense of the precious golden ore of the human material.

Divine Master, you who attained the supreme transformation and brought for earth-consciousness and for humanity—which represents the highest evolute of the earth-consciousness—a divine Power, you who have been watching “from your Eternity the works of Time”, may you help us to put the Divine in the centre of our life—individual and corporate—and rebuild it on another and a higher than mere economic basis; for, all along history, the old ego-centric and economy-centric basis of individual and collective life has invited conflicts and destruction. Atomic power can annihilate man but the transformation of his nature can be effected with the help of the divine Power alone.

Fifty years ago, you, in your inspired vision, clearly envisaged that the change which India—and also the world—needed was not a mere political change (though political freedom was indispensable)—not merely economic progress (though you emphasised that poverty must be banished from India and the world), not simply a social advance. The change required is psychological,—an inner change. And you were the first, and perhaps the only one, to point out that this inner change did not consist in embodying only the ethical values of life. Ethical values can be a stage, an important step, in the direction of the required inner change but they are not the end. The change needed is an entire change of consciousness, a transformation of man’s nature. Such a change can come only by putting the Divine in the centre of man’s life and all his activities. That was what was meant when you spoke of “the Avatar in the nation.”

You had clearly seen the goal even in 1908 when you declared, “You must realise Him [i.e., God] in yourselves, you must shape your lives, you must shape the life of the great nation, so that it may be fit to reveal Him.—You have been called upon to do God’s work.”

It was prophetic when you said in those days : “The whole nation will rise, the whole people of this Great Country will rise, filled with the divine Power, filled with the inspiration of the Almighty.”

Today we hope that the whole of humanity will be filled with that divine Power and achieve the great transformation—for what you have brought down is not for India alone but for humanity, for the earth-consciousness. Let India aspire and be filled with that inspiration.

As for this Bangabani Institute, it is a sign of the beginning of fulfilment of your prophecy about India. May your divine Presence inspire the workers of Bangabani with your high ideals. May it give them purity, sincerity, surrender and harmony. May this work grow in your fostering Light, and with the

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Mother's blessings may the workers spread the message of the new age by their lives.

May these sacred relics of your material sheath act as the catalytic agent and accelerate that process of psychological transformation of man's nature from an ego-centric and desire-driven being into the image of your divine Nature.

Victory to your supreme alchemy ! Victory to Sri Aurobindo and the Mother !

HOW THE MOTHER'S GRACE CAME TO US*

Reminiscences of Various People in Contact with the Mother

(Continued from the previous issue)

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THE ENGINEER GRACE

THE construction of the Golconde, a marvel of engineering, the only of its kind in India and standing among the rarest types of building-work, was started in 1938 with the help of Antonin Reymond, an American architect of Czech birth, a Japanese engineer named Sundaram by Sri Aurobindo, and Chandulal, an Indian engineer.

This three-storeyed building, with two wings each of nine rooms on a storey (54 large rooms in all), has a whole set of rooms for stores and dining in the basement.

During the construction work, an engineering problem arose. None of the engineers could find a solution to it. Chandulal suggested : "Why not go to the Mother and seek her advice ?" The others opined that the Mother could very well remove the spiritual difficulties, but wondered how she could help in technical difficulties of engineering.

Somehow they agreed to go to her on the plea that even though she might not be able to help them out of their difficulties, she could at least give them some advice on their next move and, besides, it could well be an extra occasion to have the Mother's company for some time.

They went upstairs to her and put their problem before her. Each one of them had sought its solution in a different way and come to a point from where he could not proceed further. The Mother asked where, in particular, each one's obstacle lay. After she had given each a concentrated and quiet hearing, without hesitation she told them, "Why don't you try this way ?..." and she explained to them what could possibly be done.

As soon as she had told this to them, their minds started converging

* Readers are invited to send their experiences to the Editor.

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on a common plan, amazed how none of them had thought of that solution, which was indeed the right one.

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Similarly another Ashram engineer had once a difficulty in a building work in the Playground.

A wall was in a dangerous condition. So he showed it to the Mother on the spot, and asked her what he should do. After a little concentration, she told him, "Buttress it from here and plaster it afterwards. That will be all right."

The solution, to the utter surprise of the engineer, was correct. He could not help asking the Mother, "But how could you know this?"

"I kept quiet for a time and contacted Engineer X and got the answer from him," she replied smiling.

AN OVERNIGHT CHANGE

I had a small cloth shop and along with it a shoe store. My partners dealt with me very badly. Ultimately they led me over head and ears into debt. I could not find any way out. All my hopes were shattered.

I was forced to break with my partners. I had now no money left to proceed with. I could not even provide for my family's immediate needs.

The strain of this situation affected my health. In such a condition I came into contact with a devotee of the Mother and Sri Aurobindo. I told him all about my state. "Why do you worry so much?" he said. "Remember the Mother and she will do everything for you." Till then I did not know anything about the Mother. But he spoke as if the Mother were magic. I told him, "It is beyond your Mother's power to pull me out of this wretched plight. It is impossible. I can't believe it."

Yet he persuaded me to write to the Mother. I was a worshipper of Kali. Reluctantly and half-heartedly I wrote a letter to the Mother. After a short time, as if indeed by a miracle, I saw that conditions began to improve. The sale proceeds of the shop started rising steeply. This outer change in business brought about such a transformation in my heart and such a spontaneous faith in the Mother that I laid all my business before her when I came to Pondicherry. I accepted her as in-charge of my inner and outer affairs. Now people started giving me goods worth many thousands without even being asked. My business continues to flourish in capital and goods. All my prosperity is due to the Mother. I owe to her more than I can ever be grateful for.

HOW THE MOTHER'S GRACE CAME TO US

SUDDEN RELIEF

It was the day after the Mother's Birthday in 1956. Just the day before it I had a strong will to open myself and surrender to her. Perhaps it was in reaction to this will that I started getting hostile suggestions and attacks seeking to frustrate my efforts at Yogic sadhana.

"You will not be able to do Yoga. It is a very difficult and perilous path. You are inviting unnecessary trouble and dangers. Leave it and be free"—such was the constant vehement suggestion. I almost felt helpless.

The attack was mainly on the mental plane, the vital was quiescent and remained unaffected. Yet I kept up my Godward will and recalled Sri Aurobindo's words on the need of willed surrender and on the consequence of deaying the Divine, which he details in the first chapter of *The Mother*.

I also repeated to myself time and again this assurance of the Divine in the Gita : "Know it for certain, O son of Kunti, that My devotee perishes not."

Two hours passed. Although inwardly agitated I behaved normally to the outward sight and did not tell anybody. In fact I could think of none in the city who could really help me.

Suddenly an idea flashed through my mind that I should write the whole thing to the Mother immediately.

I picked up my pen and writing-pad and started writing. As soon as I reached the end of my letter, I was surprised to find my trouble completely gone. There was no attack, no struggle, even no after-effects and I was full of calm and joy.

TO GRACE THROUGH ILLNESS

For some time I had not been keeping in good health. Most of the time I felt indisposed and there was a general disability to perform my daily work well.

Although I had been devoted to Sri Aurobindo and the Mother I had not yet visited the Ashram. During the last Durga Puja days, I felt a strong urge to visit the Ashram, but as all my earned leave had been exhausted, it became very difficult for me to arrange leave from my office. My indisposition became for me a fit cause for applying for leave on medical grounds and I considered it to be a divine boon that through it I got a chance to fulfil my aspiration to visit the Ashram.

So I approached the local doctor. He wanted to make a thorough examination. When he took my blood pressure he found it high. And, without my particularly mentioning to him about my proposed visit to Pondicherry,

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he advised me complete rest for at least two months and gave me a certificate to that effect. He also prescribed certain medicines which could help me to improve my health.

Thus I submitted my leave application along with the medical certificate to my superiors. My leave was sanctioned.

A few days later when I came to the next main railway junction on my way to Pondicherry, I consulted one of my relatives, who is Chief Medical Officer of the Tramways Company of the city, and found to my utter surprise that my blood pressure was normal. On his advice, I stopped taking medicine so far as it related to blood pressure. As for my general weakness and indisposition, I now feel improved in health immensely without much use of medicine.

I consider the whole turn of this incident as a mysterious Grace of the Mother who has helped me in fulfilling my urge and turning to the Divine.

Compiled and Reported by

HAR KRISHAN SINGH

THE RIVER TO THE SEA

THE River murmurs to the Sea :
“I have dreamed of God’s infinity,
And stung by the passion of His Grace
I yearn for the vast-armed Love’s embrace.
I run to pour myself in thee,
O many-toned godhead of the sea.

“I am no common river maiden
Whose thoughts with littleness are laden.
Unsoiled, unbound and ever free,
I bear high Heaven’s purity.
In my downrush from plains divine
In Shiva’s matted locks I shine.

“I am the daughter of the hill
And know the silence that can thrill
The soul to swoon in deep delight.
I hear the voices of the night,
The fairies’ dance in midnight’s hour
When gods and nymphs in passion flower.

“I have pulsed the ascetic’s heart of bliss
Renouncing all for God’s sole kiss ;
I have known the trance where all is waking,
An illumination and remaking ;
And calm meditations of the wise,
All life with Self to harmonise.

“I have glimpsed the dawnlight’s mystic face
Where all is Beauty and a Grace.
I have felt the moonbeam’s bright caress
When earth is robed in her magic dress ;
And star-sentinels who vigil keep
Twinkle from worlds of dream and sleep.

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“I leave my caverned home and hearth
To seek my Sun and my new birth
In a vaster freer air of self
Where dwells no lesser god or elf.
An aspiration carries me
Through winding ways of wizardry.

“A Strength divine is in my limbs,
Therefore I dare the downward climbs.
From rock to rock, through hill and deep
With a radiance in my heart I leap.
No wayside bars can hinder me,
For a Flame-intuition guides, O Sea !

“I leave for man upon the soil
Sweet springs of life to crown his toil,
As ever widening I advance
With a shining laughter in my glance
Through scenes of wonder and delight
Or barren spots of Nature’s night.

“The maidens come with eyes of dream
To fill their pitchers in my stream,
With bubbling laughter in their mouth
And light spring steps of honied youth;
Then wend their way toward their homes,
When twilight fades and evening comes.

“The Gopis’ love at Vrindavun
Like a fire in my veins doth run;
And the deep dream-cry of Krishna’s flute
That draws all passions to transmute.
I have heard the golden song of yore,
The mystic’s chant upon my shore.

“My heart is a melodious lyre
Of love’s vibrations sweet and dire
And, carrying a plenitude of gifts,
Towards the unconned profound it drifts
To enter into thy phantom caves
Beneath the roar of surface waves.

THE RIVER TO THE SEA

“Thy rapture’s cry is in my ears :
Enthralled I move, I have no fears.
The past is like a distant strain
Sweetening my forward steps, O Man !
My tryst now ends, I plunge in thee,
O many-toned godhead of the sea.”

PRITHWISINGH

THUS SANG MY SOUL

(Poems to the Mother)

(continued from the previous issue)

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V. SELF-FATHOMING AND SOUL'S STRUGGLE

(Continued)

33. HELP, O MOTHER !

O MOTHER, Thy child is stuck in the marsh of a middle zone.
The pull of the frightening chasm drags me deeper down.
I steadily swiftly drift into a dragon-well.
The faithless verveless earth slides from under my feet.
The hideous hoods of the Pit frown grey against the Sun.
Unawares, a dark malignant grip has circled my soul.
The showers of light no more now bathe me with their shine.
No more my heart responds to the wonders of high Will
That made me work out things unimagined or undreamt.
O Mother, lance Thy Grace-beam at my knotted self
To wake the lightning-will that is lying locked in my drowse,
And free the path up-leading to Thy Home of Heaven.

(To be continued)

HAR KRISHAN SINGH

THE UNACKNOWLEDGED SERVANT

IN the nether courts of Mortality there stood in a long line, waiting to be paid, the many servants of the ubiquitous god, Death.

In the vanguard were the destroyers : Cancer, with his hideous visage, Plague with a soiled garment about his skeletal form, Famine with her horrid grin of victory. There stood Accident, his face a mask of frozen horror, and over there, belching and wheezing and chuckling, were the two bloated brothers, Corruption and Greed.

Many, many are the servants of Death.

But now came another one, gibbering and jabbering and creating a very fury of disturbance. Impatiently she walked up and down the long column, waving her scrawny arms in desperation because no one would give place to her.

Her mouth was working convulsively and the words came vibrant and harsh. Yet, strange to say, there was about her a curious attraction, an evil fascination that made them listen to the vituperation.

Her voice rose to a crescendo :

“Fools,” she cried, “don’t you know who I am ?”

The rest were silent.

“Can’t you understand that I am more important than most of you will ever be ? Don’t you know who it is that is always on hand to prompt the suicide and the murder, who paves the way for many of you to do your deadly work ? Don’t you realise who it is that wrecks happiness, corrupts the well-meaning, and hardens the hearts of these puny and vulnerable mortals ?

It is I, I, you blind fools, it is I...”

“But who are you ?” said War, who was by comparison quite respectable. She looked at him with fury and amazement.

“Don’t you recognise me, you stupid unthinking creature ?” she screamed, “I am Gossip, I am Gossip...”

GODFREY

TOWARDS UNITY

“Unity the race moves towards and must one day realise.”

Sri Aurobindo in *The Ideal of Human Unity* (Ch. 27).

THE ideal of human unity is as old as the Veda. The closing words of the Rig-vedic hymns come to mind in this connection : “Join together, speak one word, let your minds arrive at one knowledge even as the ancient gods arriving at one knowledge partake each of his own portion ..One and common be your aspiration, united your hearts, common to you be your mind, so that close companionship may be yours.”¹ And the prayer uttered by the poet of the Yajurveda has rung through the ages in the hearts of the great of soul : “Where I am wounded, make me firm and whole. May all creatures gaze on me with the eye of the Friend, may I gaze on all creatures, may we all gaze on all with the eye of the Friend.”² When Zarathustra prayed : “Oh Ahura ! grant unto us that by which we may overpower the hatred of the detesting foes,”³ or the Buddha exclaimed, “How will ever hatred disappear from earth if hate remains the answer to hate”, they were preparing the path which all must one day tread. “Weapons at best are tools of bad omen, loathed and avoided by those of the Way. As for those who delight to do murder, it is certain they never can get from the world what they sought when ambition urged them to power and rule”:⁴ these words of the Old Master Lao Tze of China have almost a modern tone. The magnificent words of Isaiah still ring true : “And they shall beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning-hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.” Christ blessed the peacemakers, “for they shall be called sons of God”. The Prophet of Islam added : “All God’s creatures are His family”, and “the greatest enemies of God are those who without cause shed the blood of man”.⁵

In our own day, the desire for peace is the one bond that unites the peoples. The Mother’s Prayers bear a constant refrain : “Paix, Paix sur toute la terre.” For unity is peace.

¹ Sri Aurobindo’s translation in *Hymns to the Mystic Fire*.

² *The Future Poetry*, p. 306.

³ *Gatha Ahunavairi, Yasna 28-6*.

⁴ *The Way of Life*, translation by Blakney, p. 83.

⁵ *Sayings of Prophet Muhammad* (ed. Md. Amin).

TOWARDS UNITY

Throughout the period of recorded history, man has been a political animal; he has sought to live together with his fellows and has tried to achieve his ends mainly in association with others. The instinct of unity seems to be ingrained in him. But men in the mass have been much too egoistic and crude to look upon the whole world as his family as the ancient ideal of *vasudhaiva kutumbakam* would demand. The only family that he did really feel as kin was in the beginning and for a fairly long time the family into which he was born; the love of the family is still strong in us. As the families grew into the clan, a new scope was given to man's gregarious instinct, a new allegiance grew. Clan-life was really the beginning of man's political life. It was the clan that remained the strongest bond of political unity in the early days of our civilised existence. It was so in ancient India, in ancient China and Egypt, among the civilised Celts of early times and the ancient Americans of Guatemala. Clannishness is not yet dead among us. There are even people who preserve much of the old clan-feeling in their political life; such were the Scotch Highlander and the Irish peasant of recent times, the tribal peoples of Africa and New Zealand, the frontier tribesmen on the borders of Afghanistan. The old clan-names still persist in China and the system of the Indian *gotra* is a relic of bygone days. In some parts of the world, clan-life soon gave place to city-life, and territory became the bond of close union rather than a more or less mythical descent from the same ancestor. The ancient cities in Greece, in China and India, in the land of the Mayas are important in history. A variant was furnished by the regional peoples like the Kurus and the Bharatas of ancient India.

The *polis* or the small regional state furnished a bond of unity which seemed to many thinkers of the time as almost the only possible form of political life. Aristotle even went so far as to lay down the maxim that the ideal polity would be unmanageable with a population of a hundred thousand. The reason for this preference for the small community was clear enough. A small concentrated unit like the Athens of ancient Greece or the small regional units of the Upanishadic and epic times in India and the petty contending states which gave asylum to a Lao Tze or Confucius in China provided the best incentives to free thought and a vigorous life. A sense of equality pervaded the social as well as the political life and the free citizens shared in the intellectual or spiritual life of the centre. "Modern Europe owes two-thirds of its civilisation to three such supreme moments of human history, the religious life of the congeries of tribes which called itself Israel and, subsequently, of the little nation of the Jews, the many-sided life of the small Greek city states, the similar, though more restricted, artistic and intellectual life of mediaeval Italy. Nor was any age in Asia so rich in energy, so well worth living in, so productive of the best and most enduring fruits as that heroic period of India when she was divided into small

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kingdoms, many of them no larger than a modern district..."¹ One would be half-inclined to accept Aristotle's dictum that the small community was the best form of polity.

But the small community did not persist long; it gave way to a much bigger unit, the nation and empire and in our day to other supra-national entities which have given rise to hopes that the world may one day become politically one. The earlier polity contained defects which proved to be apparently unsurmountable; in any case it could not find the means to overcome them. One serious defect was that it did not provide much for a considerable section of the population. The women in ancient Greece and Rome were almost wholly excluded from the benefits of civilisation. "In Greece woman was a domestic slave except the Hetairae and they were educated only to please. In Rome, 'she remained at home and spun wool' was the highest eulogy for woman. It was only for a brief period of the Empire that woman began to be more free, but she was never put in an equality with man."² In India, the position of women was hardly much better in spite of the Maitreyis and Gargis of which the Upanishads keep a record. And then there was the large population of slaves and helots who did all the hard work of producing food and otherwise ministering to the comforts of the free population. In ancient India the institution of slavery was probably not so flagrantly prominent, but we had our Shudras, the men who could not aspire to be "twice-born" and thus share the benefits of civilisation with the rest. These benefits actually accrued to a small minority; the rest toiled and slaved.

Another serious defect in the ancient polity—and this was perhaps the main factor that led to its dissolution—was the element of turmoil within its own life and especially in its relations with other similar groups. The political life of the ancient Greek cities, of Rome before she became the metropolis of empire, the medieval cities in Italy, the turbulent fighting element in the ancient Indian and Chinese clan-nations could not obviously continue indefinitely, but there was hardly any sign that their quarrels would stop. These cities could never unite and the habit of fighting among themselves which the warlike element in the regional peoples had contracted proved to be ineradicable. Even the lesson of the Persian invasion would not teach the Athenians and Spartans to forget their quarrels; and all the political genius of Sri Krishna could not prevent the clan-nations of epic India from destroying themselves in War. The reason was that in those days of difficult communication, distance engendered insularity and, even though civilised in other respects, each small

¹ *The Ideal of Human Unity*, Chapter I.

² *Letters of Sri Aurobindo*, "Advent", Aug. 1950.

TOWARDS UNITY

unit continued to look upon all outsiders as simple barbarians. Repeated attempts at some kind of rapprochement were made in Greece and in ancient India and China : there were Confederacies and Leagues and overlordships. They failed in the end to create the necessary feeling of unity. The unity had finally to be imposed from above, through the domination of a stronger power arising from among themselves or encroaching from abroad. It was thus that the Greeks lost their independence to the Macedonian Philip, the ancient Italian cities and regional peoples had to accept the yoke of Rome, the Persian tribes were hammered into unity by the arms of Cyrus and Darius, the Indian kingdoms were formed into the empire of Chandragupta Maurya, the Chinese became a political unit under the first Emperor Shi Hwang Ti of the Chins. The old polity had to give way to a novel form.

(To be continued)

SANAT K. BANERJI

MASS EDUCATION ON THE SCREEN

FORMERLY the masses of our country listened to the readings from the Ramayana, the Mahabharata and the Bhagavata, the music of cymbals and songs of the moving *varagi*, of the one-stringed instrument and song of the *baul*, Puranic stories of the *Kathak*, songs and instructive tales of itinerant *sadhus* and *sannyasis* without number. This was in those days our mass education—education blended with delight.

Then in the age of the renaissance there appeared the stage in our cities. Today the screen has left the stage behind. Nobody is unaware of its unbounded influence on the mass mind, especially in cities and industrial towns. Hence, doubtless, it has become one of the principal media of mass education.

But, though a medium of mass education, it has virtually become a commercial venture.

It is the desire-being of man that is slowly swallowing up his high aspiration, sense of refinement, perception of beauty, idealistic feeling and almost all that is great and noble in him—it is exploiting man's life and social institutions for commercial ends. Today's educational institutions and holy places too have turned into trade centres.

The screen is a means of mass education, it is a special kind of art, but far more truly it is a good business. That is why the profit-factor counts more in a film industry than does mass education. Where State control over social life is dominant, there too the film industry has become a mouthpiece of some "ism" or a promoter of party interests or a propaganda machine.

In the film industry the eye of the producer is on profit. Along with his capital, his greed of gain influences this industry to a large extent. But among the writers, directors and artists there are too, especially in Bengal, educated youths of good taste and of high ideals, their influence too is no less, rather immense. That is why from time to time we see the appearance of such a high-class picture as is not only truly useful in the matter of mass education but is, from the points of view of good taste and fine sense of art and beauty, far above the average. Another remarkable fact about such a superior order of pictures is that they have not merely not scaled down the profit but have augmented it. "Bhagawan Sri Krishna Chatanya", "Rani Rasmani", "Meera" (Hindi), "Kabuliwala", "Sri Sri Ma" and a few other such pictures bear witness to this fact.

In these pictures the artistes and others concerned have made a daring attempt to knock the wrong idea on the head that no picture can go down with the public if it cannot raise the thrill of the low form of love, in other words, sensual love, and struggle between desire and indulgence. As a result, there has arisen a possibility of clearing the cinema of the charge which used to be levelled at it even till the other day that it was the cause of low morals.

The public of Bengal too have accorded their warm appreciation to this bold attempt. This shows that the mind of her people is no longer in favour of the usual order. Although the natural trend of their mind has not yet gone high, the aspirations of their heart are rising more and more towards a higher life. In pictures they expect to see realistic representations of great ideal lives.

Now that there has appeared in society a widespread decline in morals, the zealous youths in this industry, if they choose to introduce into the film-medium a higher element of beauty and idealism calculated to inspire higher thoughts and higher aspirations and if they can work in an organised way to make it a success, can save the people from a deplorable moral anarchy and ruin and replace the downward course by a new channel of social reconstruction.

Whoever, in this crisis, will devote themselves to this great work will receive the unstinted blessings of the Mother, her power will be their constant help and take them forward towards victory by overcoming all obstacle and danger.

The smaller the area commanded by a language, the smaller the margin of profit arising from the picture. From this point of view, the scope of Bengali pictures is much too narrow for costly productions. Hindi has no such handicap. The scope of English is world-wide, but it has been found that Bengali pictures, if good, can push their way into the wider world. Hence the way to get over the narrow scope is to start a drive towards the fullness of perfection. It has also been found that despite their largeness of scope, Hindi pictures, judged by the standard of excellence, are still behind Bengali productions.

The power that can push through barriers and limitations is the power of genius, of whole-hearted and indomitable effort. Bengal has never been lacking in that. What has happened at times has been the lack of a high vision. Gaze upwards at the sky and you move upwards towards the mountain-peak; look downwards and you glide into the bottomless abyss.

Even genius has its unending scope for unfoldment. But unaided human effort avails little; if one has an aspiration for its flowering and is turned towards the Mother, her Grace can make for its constant expansion.

By the way, there is another fact that calls for attention. Many a pathetic

picture of tragedy has been drawn in literature, shown on the stage and on the screen and this is still being done. Easy it is to move the audience to tears by a pathetic presentation of the struggles and shocks of a desire-driven life and of the cruel irony of fate, easy it is to draw profit from such flow of tears and evoke words of praise—"How wonderful, no ugly love-scenes in the picture, yet how beautiful, one can't help shedding tears." The story-parts of *Pather Panchali*, *Dak Harkara* and a few other good pictures are, from start to finish, an unrelieved continuity of cruelty and pathos. These pictures, however good, whatever their merits, give a violent shake-up to man's hope and confidence in the world :

"Life a mere fleeting moment,
Hardly have you waked up from sleep,
Hardly have you opened your eyes and seen the light,
Alas, it flies.
Hope springs up and deludes,
We weep and smile, make and unmake,
Hardly is your stall complete
When breaks up the fancy fair."

Are we to take it that this old, old wail of apathy sums up our life ?

However flawless the direction, the music, the action, the photography and other executions, the perfection of all these only serves to accentuate the pathos. The worlds depicted in these pictures show as if there were no such things as God's Grace and man's soul, simply sorrow and death dominate their scenes; in all their environments it is the depressing touch that is quickened.

These pictures do not make for mass education; rather, they give a misdirection to education. They leave on the heart of the spectators an imprint of despair which unconsciously influences their thought, feeling and emotion and may lead their life to a similar tragic end.

Just as the obscenities of sensual pictures arouse thoughts of lust and push the life-force into its ways and sensational stories stir up in young men the spirit of daring robbery—there is a body of opinion that the increase in robbery and dacoity among the educated youths in India is due to a wide circulation of sensational novels and cinema pictures—so predominantly pathetic pictures also help spread the benumbing influence of despair and inertia in the heart and nerves.

Far be it from me to suggest that sorrow and pain should never be filmed at all. Sorrow has, no doubt, some part to play in the quickening of sensitiveness, in the refinement of taste, in bearing down barbarism, in shattering and altering

stereotyped frame-works of thoughts and ideas. On the wild impulses of the blind life-force sorrow has a chastening effect. That is why it helps a lot also on the path of progress, helps as well in developing idealism.

But the keynote of life is victory and ascent—the progressive evolution of the soul. Pain and suffering, joy and sorrow are all for its fulfilment. The strings on both sides of the main chord of the *sitar* give different notes in order, by the richness of their variety, to lend beauty and charm to the main note and throw it into prominence. But if the main note is missed and a subsidiary one is suffered to take its place, then harmony sinks into discordance. In human society there are many, maybe hundred per cent, out-of-tune, disharmonious lives. But they are not to be our ideal, nor worthy of study; they deserve to be mended or put aside.

A high-class picture should show, on the one hand, as much of unflawed application of skill and symmetry of form, consummate action, fine sense of art and beauty and wise direction as, on the other hand, a heroic spirit of joy and victory emerging from a life-story of shocks and struggles, joys and sorrows. It is not enough to present a picture of the scaffold in all its grim reality and then show on it a figure as sad and pathetic as possible; the scaffold has to resound with the triumphant song of life. Then only will the picture fulfil itself as a fit instrument of popular education. From heart to heart should vibrate the moan of pain in the grand note of a new life. Otherwise where pain ends in the gloom of grief, there is the triumph of helpless despair and inert frustration.

“In the stunning blow and fall swells the note of sense,
In the din and strife of life rings Thy voice of the deeps”
(Rabindranath Tagore)

If through the conflicts of pleasure and pain, life and death, one can help us to hear the Voice of the deeps, then the picture of pain and grief turns its other face—the face of delight. It is only such pictures that can create hope and confidence in the human mind for the conquest of pain and grief. Such pictures can raise man's vision high above life and its sorrows and can set it on the quest of a supreme delight. Such pictures alone can dispel from the heart of the nation the thick gloom of despair and fill it with hopes and aspirations for a great work.

Pictures of this type will commend themselves to the public. For although man is prone to sorrow and death, the delight of existence carries its flag of triumph. Sri Aurobindo's voice rings in our ears :

“Poets make much of death and external afflictions, but the only tragedies are the soul's failures and the only epic man's triumphant ascent towards godhead.”

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This is the epic that is the need of the day—the need in the life of the society and the nation, the need in literature and art, on the stage and on the screen.

RATAN RAI

(Translated by Tinkari Mitra from the Bengali article “Pardāya Loksiksha” in “Srinwantu”, Kartik, 1365.)

BOOKS IN THE BALANCE

Sri Aurobindo International University Centre, published by the Sri Aurobindo Memorial Fund Society, "Sahakar", B Road, Marine Drive, Bombay 1. Pages 124+ XXXIV; price Rs. 5/-

Education is the medium for the spreading of ideas and growth of discipline, culture and civilisation, and a very important factor in the development of a more wakeful, organised and illumined life. And when the object is to hasten the divine life on earth, education becomes an indispensable means for the development and discipline of the instrumental being of man so that it becomes fit, plastic and awakened, ready to receive and assimilate a higher Light. For, the dream of a divine life will ever remain unfulfilled unless the instrumental being of man also becomes a suitable receptacle and vehicle of the all-creative and all-powerful Spirit

The Sri Aurobindo International University Centre, to be now known as the Sri Aurobindo International Centre of Education, was considered by Sri Aurobindo, "as one of the best means of preparing the future humanity to receive the supramental light that will transform the élite of today into a new race manifesting upon earth the new light and force and life". It has been created "to give man the conditions of life" necessary for such a realisation.

The formation of this Centre is a unique event in the history of education. For, here the education does not aim at giving the students book-knowledge or wide information about the life of the world at large or preparing them for a career or even moulding them to be useful citizens of the world, but at helping them "grow up into straightforward, frank, upright, and honourable human beings ready to develop into divine nature."

The Centre now enters its 8th year. Depicting its multifarious activities in photographs and citing short passages from the writings of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother, a profusely illustrated brochure printed entirely on fine art paper has been released. It vividly communicates to us the sense in which education is conceived and imparted at the Centre. We learn from it that the Centre wants to develop the soul-element of children into full flower and ultimately influence and organise their entire life through its silent power. The Centre wants to create for society "a place that no nation could claim as the sole property; a place where all human beings of goodwill, sincere in their aspiration,

could live freely as citizens of the world, obeying one single authority, that of the supreme Truth; a place of peace, concord, harmony, where all the fighting instincts of man would be used exclusively to conquer the causes of his sufferings and miseries, to surmount his weakness and ignorance, to triumph over his limitations and incapacities; a place where the needs of the spirit and the care for progress would get precedence over the satisfaction of desires and passions, the seeking for material pleasures and enjoyment....Education would be given not with a view to passing examinations and getting certificates and posts but for enriching the existing faculties and bringing forth new ones. In this place titles and positions would be supplanted by opportunities to serve and organise.”

The Education Centre with three educational divisions, Primary, Secondary and Higher, provides education in almost all subjects any University can teach, including technical training in carpentry, elementary mechanical and electrical engineering, shorthand and typewriting, book-keeping and commercial correspondence, embroidery, tailoring, cottage industries, agriculture, drawing and craftsmanship, vocal and instrumental music (Indian and European), dancing, photography, painting, dramatics etc. Most of the Indian and many foreign languages are taught, with the final aim to teach the child all subjects in his mother-tongue. This forum of world-culture has a central library of about 40,000 books.

The aim of the Centre’s physical education is, in the words of the Mother, “to make the body strong and supple so that it may become in the material world a fit instrument for the truth-force which wills to manifest in humanity.” The training programme, always progressive, covers a wide field of physical activities conducive to a complete development of the body—health, strength, co-ordination, agility, speed, endurance, proportion, harmony, grace.

The Centre is an experiment in integral education, an international exhibition of various cultures and a place to realise the ideal of human unity. It admits students without distinction of race, nationality, caste, sex or creed. Education is given free of charge. Only the cost of board and lodging and the student’s personal expenses have to be met.

The inspiring passages, culled in the Brochure from the Master’s and the Mother’s writings and standing under the photographs, have a large variety : Students’ Prayer, To the Children of the Ashram, To the Parents, An International University Centre, A Dream, A True and Living Education, Three Principles of Teaching, On Art and Music, Physical Culture, Perfection of the Body, Divine Body, etc. The concluding part of the Brochure includes a short sketch of Sri Aurobindo’s Life, His Ashram and His Teaching, and the General Regulations of the Centre.

The photograph-pictures include those connected with the opening of

the Centre, Children at study, play and amusement, playing the band orchestra, acting in a dramatic performance, working in the fields and at construction work.

The Brochure, priced far below its cost, will be an invaluable asset to all academic institutions and should be in the hands of all planners of education.

“BANDA”

To the Lord and Lover, *By Hor Krishan Singh*. Published by Sri Aurobindo Yog-Mandir, UNA (Punjab).

A great crisis has come upon the world and as Sri Aurobindo predicts in *The Life Divine*, “the feeling that there is no other solution than the spiritual cannot but grow and become more imperative under the urgency of critical circumstances.” But people do not as yet have a clear idea of what true spirituality is. Most people in the world today are religious, but they do not have much faith in the creeds, dogmas and specific rites and ceremonies, they follow them more as a habit than with knowledge or faith. These again constitute the externalities of religion, not its essence, and though they may be of some aid at the beginning, when one gets entangled in them all spiritual progress is stopped. The essence of religion is to find God, following whatever paths may suit our nature, and the most effective method is to aspire, to be possessed by God by cultivating devotion and love towards Him. There have been many movements to impress this truth on the minds of men, and the rise of the Sikh religion in India is a very remarkable example. It has its roots in the Hindu tradition, in the Vedas and the Upanishads and the Puranas, but it has boldly discarded the rites and ceremonies and social customs and practices that had become identified with Hindu religion but had lost all significance and utility and, having become mechanical, actually stood in the way of social and spiritual progress. Thus it makes no distinction of caste or creed, it does not encourage image worship, it seeks directly to develop love for the Divine in our hearts and as a means sings the name and glory of the Divine and serves Him through the service rendered to fellow-beings who are all regarded as the abodes or temples of the Divine.

Some devotional songs composed by the Sikh Gurus culled from *Guru Granth Sahib*, the Holy Book of the Sikhs, have been translated into simple and touching English verse in the booklet under review. “In some of the songs,” says the young author in the Preface, “Guru Nanak considers himself as a servant or a lover and the object of his love is the Divine as Lord and

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Supreme King, even child-like and almost mad with love, a woman whose heart's core is empty and barren of the fulfilling affection of her lord and, ready for any sacrifice, cries either for glimpsing her husband or for being loved and possessed by him."

But, unless based on true knowledge and supported by work (as service rendered to the Divine seated in the hearts of all human beings, *sarvabhūtamte rata*, as the Gita says), love turns into a blind sentimentality and has not much spiritual force. So the Sikh Gurus, through their simple songs, have inculcated the highest Vedantic truth of oneness. To all this love and knowledge, one must get initiation from a worthy Guru who should be worshipped and loved as the representative of the Divine Himself. Thus we find all the essentials of a powerful spiritual discipline in Sikhism :

The Absolute and Secondless One,
The Sole Existent infinite Om,
The name that is, the Being True,
The Creator All-Determinant, who
Has not one fear, no enmity,
The Timeless Person, Immortal, free,
The Birthless, Self-Existent, He
Is found by Guru's Grace alone.

ANILBARAN

BUDDHISM VIS-A-VIS HINDUISM

(Continued from the previous issue)

TRANSITORINESS AND PAINFULNESS OF EXISTENCE

BESIDES the above, there are other differences of nuances and emphases. These generally relate to the emphasis on the misery and transitoriness of this life. The Vedanta too has stressed the fleeting character of the world's goods, but that is more than balanced by its emphasis on the bliss, peace and freedom of the transcendental experience. That is why a reading of Hindu and Buddhist literatures leaves two distinctly different impressions on the mind.

The Vedanta has declared as much as Buddha did the impossibility of describing the transcendental experience in the language of the mind, but it did not shirk the responsibility of evoking it, conjuring it up, suggesting it by expressive images, symbols and parables. True, Buddha was a master-mind in the use of parables, but he used these to illustrate his discourses on morals and meditation. On the other hand the Vedanta used parables and a suggestive terminology to hint, however imperfectly, something of the beauty and joy and freedom of the transcendental experience. This explains why Buddhism leaves an impression of emptiness and transience, while the Vedanta leaves an impression of joy and freedom.

In Buddhism, the bifurcation or divorce between the phenomenal and the transcendental worlds is rather too complete, too trenchant. There is no point of contact or interchange between the two. The phenomenal world is all misery and flux while the world beyond the realm of birth and death is aloof and incommunicable. The two worlds completely exclude each other. There are no reflections, no echoes, no responses of the one in the other.

In the Vedanta it is different. Even in the interpretations most akin to Buddhism, the world and the jivas derive their existence from the Mayashakti of the Divine. In the more affirmative interpretations, the world acquires a status of the fullest reality for the first time—a reality infinitely more full than the one given by materialists, if indeed their “reality” could be called by that name at all. True, the world is “nothing” without God, but there is no such world. Everything is derived from God, moves and has its being in God. God is behind, above, beneath and in the heart of everything. The human soul looks back to its divine origin, and looks forward to its divine destiny.

It hungers for the divine truth, its "pasturage" as Plato calls it, beholds it and in gazing upon it is "replenished and made glad", and fulfilled. In the language of the Gita and the Katha Upanishad, the tree of life has its "roots above". The world and its existence are grounded in God: "On it all the worlds do rest". What could be a surer, more solid foundation for human life on earth? According to the Hermetic tradition, what is above is also below. The terrestrial reflects the celestial.

We have not only the phenomenon of the *jivas* aspiring and ascending to Godhead, we find God coming down to the earth, putting on the limitations of our earthly life in order to save beings and help them in their spiritual evolution. So there is a loving interchange, an "open sesame" between God and beings, between the Universal and the individual, between the Transcendental and the phenomenal. There is a relationship of antiphony between Bhagawan and His bhakta. They live and move with their centres in each other. Each finds his perfect response, reflection, image and echo in the other.

Flowing from the above truths, there is another difference in the method of Sadhana. In Buddhism, there being no loving God, one has to work out one's salvation alone and with diligence. In the Vedanta there is no lack of call on the personal effort of the aspirant, but this must very soon give place to a complete reliance on the Divine, complete surrender to the Divine will. "Abandoning all duties, all methods, all techniques of meditation, come unto Me alone for shelter. I will liberate thee from all sins": this is the message of Sri Krishna in the Gita. The personal effort of the Sadhak, when it is sincere and persistent, evokes Divine help. The heavenly waters of Divine Grace fill him, inundate him, drown him¹. This difference in approach again makes Buddhism look dry, ascetic and arduous, while the methods of Sadhana developed on the basis of the Upanishads are joyous and free.

But let us not stress the differences too far. As we have seen, there is an important tradition of the Vedanta which is very much akin to the life-denying trend in Buddhism; similarly there are many schools of Buddhist philosophy and many Buddhist methods of Sadhana which are akin to the more affirmative tradition of Hinduism. In these schools, one does not pass into a void or shunya attained through negation of all thought-forms or thought-complexes and through detachment from the world (the process called Ashtangayoga by the Hindus), but takes refuge in the "compassionate Buddha". Buddhism in these developments is no longer dry or flat, but rich and even luxuriant. But I have purposely refrained from a discussion of these powerful developments in Buddhism. For I wanted to concentrate on those elements alone

¹ In this connection, St. Teresa's analogy of four waters is very illuminating

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that are found in the earliest records and are agreed upon by all schools and to determine where those elements stood in relation to Hinduism.

The nature of Buddhist Nothingness should not be misunderstood. In fact there is hardly anything peculiarly Buddhist about this Nothingness. It is the process of self-noughting enjoined by all religions and all mystic disciplines. For going into spiritual regions above, it is necessary to pass through the doors of Nothingness.

Moreover ceasing-to-be is not a dry or life-denying process as many people outside the Mystic Way think. As useless sensations, mental constructions and idealizings, vital desires and sentimentalizings fall away from one's true being, one feels lighter, freer, happier. Life which was otherwise dark, divided, dwarfed, painful, anxious and weary knows for the first time its true status of joy, freedom, light and power.

Nor has there been a right understanding of the true nature of *dukkha* which figures so much in Buddha's teachings and which prejudices people's thinking of Buddhism. The status of *dukkha* is not psychological but metaphysical. At the level of duality and phenomenality, there can only be *dukkha* whether psychologically so manifested or not, or even when, psychologically speaking, agreeable and pleasant sensations accompany the life at this plane.

CONCLUSION

In the above discussion we found that Buddha and his spiritual experiences and teachings formed part of a Hindu tradition. He belonged to the Upanishadic heritage. He cannot be understood in any other sense. The attempt to understand him in isolation divorced from that tradition which he confirmed, enriched and represented, has only led to misunderstanding and distortion of his teachings. He himself claimed no originality. He claimed to have seen an ancient way", followed an "ancient road". Those who claim to love Buddha should also love and cherish that tradition, which was his cradle, nurse, foster-father, guide and inner inspiration. A good Buddhist has perforce to be a good Hindu too. So where is the room for current efforts at conversion? Like Buddha and later on Asoka, let a Buddhist learn to represent India again. But let him realize that India is the land not only of Buddha but also of Krishna, Rama, Shankara, Kabir, and Mira and Ramakrishna. Vedanta is not a one-book or one-prophet religion; it is the repository of a whole spiritual tradition and knowledge, nourished by countless saints and seers. Even a bit of it could give birth to such noble parts as Buddhism, Jainism, Saktism, Sikhism, Vaishnavism, Advaitism and each may be completely satisfying to its individual

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devotees as long as it is accepted with a consciousness of the whole. But accepted in a sectarian spirit, in opposition to the whole, it becomes one-sided and even distorted. Hinduism is not a melody of one note however sweetly played, but a many-luted, many-sided symphony. Let each player become aware of his part in the whole.

(Concluded)

RAMASWARUP

Students' Section

TALKS ON POETRY

(These Talks were given to a group of students starting their University life. They have been prepared for publication from notes and memory, except in the few places where they have been expanded a little. As far as possible the actual turns of phrase used in the Class have been recovered—and, at the request of the students, even the digressions have been preserved. The Talks make, in this form, somewhat unconventional pieces, but the aim has been to retain not only their touch of literature and serious thought but also their touch of life and laughter.)

TALK TWO

IT seems that last time my stick was lying across the table. God knows how it came to be there. But a professor passing by, after the bell had rung, noticed it and said to me later, "Better not keep the stick there." I asked him whether it had looked too aggressively evident in that place, as if I had been about to violate the Rule that has been set up for all the teachers. He nodded. Well, I have no intention to break the Rule, even if the parents or guardians of all of you wrote to me as the parents of a certain boy once wrote to a teacher: "Please don't whack our son. He is very delicate and at home we never beat him except in self-defence."

Yes, my intentions are perfectly peaceful. We may therefore forget the physical stick. But the mention of it serves to remind me to put before you a piece of mental beating done by a famous American writer—a heavy beating of poets and poetry, a wholesale downright castigation. The writer's name is H. L. Mencken. His attack runs thus:

"On the precise nature of this beautiful balderdash you can get all the information you need by opening at random the nearest book of verse. The ideas you will find in it may be divided into two main divisions. The first consists of denials of objective facts; the second, of denials of subjective facts, Specimen of the first sort:

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God's in His heaven—
All's right with the world.

Specimen of the second :

I am the master of my fate;
I am the captain of my soul.

It is my contention that all poetry (forgetting for the moment its possible merit as mere sound) may be resolved into either one or the other of these frightful imbecilities—that its essential character lies in the bold flouting of what every reflective adult knows to be the truth.”¹

What have we to say against Mr. Mencken while admiring the pungency of his style ? The very first thing is : he misconceives poetry by believing that “mere sound” is added to “balderdash” to make the beauty of poetry. Not to know the vital importance of form is not to know what poetry is doing. And the ignorance of this vital importance comes because one fails to realise the *inwardness* of form. Form is not something added from outside to create “possible merit” by beautiful vibrations in the air. The beautiful vibrations result by virtue of an inner harmony seized by the poet, a special thrill of experience, a special movement of the being in the shape of inner vision and inner emotion : that thrill and movement translates itself, in a successful poem, into the sound-arrangement of words, the powerful yet measured music of verbal rhythm. If poetry says anything, the substance cannot be cut asunder from the way it is expressed. Of course, there is an intelligible statement by the poet, but the verbal rhythm carries and conveys what cannot be put into an intelligible statement and it is only when we take the intelligible statement in the very sound-body the poet has given it that we receive what he wants to give. The accessible meaning is a kind of clear centre around which there is a huge halo of splendour and of mystery with marvellous suggestions. It is because of this halo that we can say of about poetry, adopting a phrase of Meredith's about the Spirit of Colour, that its touch

is infinite and lends
A yonder to all ends.

A paraphrase will give us what the intellect can make of the poetic significance—and this will often be sufficiently valuable, but if we accept it as the message of a poem or of a phrase of poetry we may slip into committing the second folly

¹ *Selected Prejudices*, p. 7.

which we can charge to Mencken : the folly of believing that poetry should aim at giving an objective truth or a subjective truth such as every reflective adult can recognise.

Mind you, I am not saying that every objective or subjective truth is bypassed by poetry on purpose. I have mentioned Mencken's "reflective adult". This phrase stands for the average grown-up person whose thought, whose reflective activity is concerned with the obvious world of common sense. If we turn such a person into a supreme standard we shall overlook three-fourths of the valuable activity of the human consciousness. The reflective adult could never be a Plato considering the obvious world of common sense as no ultimate reality but the poor image of an eternal and ideal Beauty that one can grasp only by a slow graded progression of both love and logic in a sort of philosophical ecstasy. The reflective adult could never be the hero gladly throwing away his life for the sake of a Cause that is most sacred to his inmost heart though most intangible to the sober mind: a *Bharat Mata*, a Mother India—not the monthly review of culture whose editor I am but the ageless Goddess who is the Nation-Soul enkindling all our culture, the Mother India of whom I am one of the most insignificant sons. The reflective adult could never be a Buddha renouncing all the possessions and advantages of worldly life in order to gain a divine desirelessness that is a plenitude of peace, an illimitable freedom which to the ordinary man he could describe as only a universal Zero. The reflective adult could never be even an Einstein rejecting the evident world as the basis of the ultimate theory of physics and constructing by what he calls an intuitive act a four-dimensional continuum of fused time and space as the foundation for all practical calculation. The poet and in general the artist can never be the reflective adult : he would regard such a person as not the pure stuff of what humanity should be but something sullied : the adult of this kind would be to him adulterated stuff. The word "reflective" does not impress him : the adult is reflective only in the sense of mirroring what is in front of his nose, his mind reflects like a mirror the surface of existence and never penetrates beyond.

Poetry goes beyond the usual knowledge acquired by looking outward or inward. It plunges farther than the objective or subjective surface of being—without really rejecting this surface. It sees the surface as constituting symbols of a hidden reality and, at its intensest, it lays a hand however lightly on the body of that reality itself. In various ways it uses the surface of being, objective or subjective, as pointers, peep-holes, glimmerings of a secret Splendour or a magnificent Mystery. It is this activity of poetry that we call its magic. Sometimes the magic is not intense enough and then it can mislead us into thinking that the poet is trying to talk common sense but merely succeeding in talking nonsense.

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The two quotations which Mencken has offered may strike us as by themselves not magical enough and therefore somewhat easily made a target of criticism. But the second specimen, even from the standpoint of common sense, is surely no imbecility. Do we not all feel that we have some freedom of choice in our actions and some power to rise above our circumstances? Did not Mencken feel that instead of coming down with a big stick on poetry he could have observed mentally the Rule of the Sri Aurobindo International Centre of Education—or that if an idea of his were severely criticised by a Poetry teacher of that Centre he could still keep a smile on his stolid face? Surely, in however small a field, we can achieve mastery over our fate and captancy of our soul. Perhaps the poet has cast his perception into a very resonant form and this resonant form annoyed Mencken until he felt that he was only using his stick against the delicate poet in sheer self-defence, only withstanding the attack of a sweeping dogmatic generalisation. But I think he is not giving fair play here—and certainly not giving it in the case of the first quotation. At times a poetic phrase can be severed from its context and still remain effective; at other times it cannot. Poetry creates a mood of insight not always in a single phrase but often by a cumulative, a collective effect. And if we want to receive the real impact of those two lines,

God's in His heaven—
All's right with the world,

we should look at the whole piece of which they are the conclusion.

The whole piece is from Browning's play *Pippa Passes* and is the song of a simple young girl going to her work. It is small enough for Mencken to have quoted in full :

The year's at the spring,
And day's at the morn;
Morning's at seven;
The hill-side's dew-pearled;
The lark's on the wing;
The snail's on the thorn;
God's in His heaven—
All's right with the world !

This is not sublime poetry, not great poetry, but surely it has a delicacy of mood and movement that is faultless with a rare economy. Let us see briefly what it does. It has the sense of a time when the ordinary world is at its loveliest, its

youngest, its freshest—the spring-season full of colour and fragrance, the break of day with the few first enchanting touches of light on the long darkness, the early hour of seven when we are sufficiently awake and yet not too glaringly exteriorised but keep a mixture of dream and common sense. Secondly, there is the brief selective vision of those features of the ordinary world which are either a thing at its most exquisite or a thing in its most right place. What can be more exquisite than a combination of pearly dewdrops with a purple hill-side, or a lark lifting its wings and breaking free of the earth? And can the lark be more appropriately placed than in the sky, winging upwards its small body of song within a vast silence, or can the snail be more appropriately situated with its spiral protective shell and its two tiny searching horns than on the shrub or tree which is spikey and serves a snail with juts on which it can rest again and again and from which it can safely proceed to look for its flowery food? We have on the whole the suggestion of a perfect moment in a world which Browning knew very well to be in many respects an imperfect one. Yes, he was no blind fool—but he could see, as Mencken cannot, that certain combinations of phenomena can give a feeling as if for a while the imperfect world were disclosing a Divine Presence and becoming the glimpse of a super-cosmos in which everything manifests a flawless Beauty. This visionary moment has been embodied by Browning in his little lyric with a sensitive choice of word-pictures and word-rhythms. When we take his poem from start to finish, we do feel that he is justified in saying that God's in His Heaven and all's right with the world. The conclusion is the conclusion of a mood-formulation, it is not philosophy, not science, not common sense pronouncing an opinion for all time. It is the culmination of a shimmering insight and comes to the rightly responsive reader as something indisputable—not a frightful imbecility but a revelation on a miniature scale.

We have to know what poetry is trying to do and then be in a receptive state in order to appreciate it. The consideration of Browning's lyric as a whole proves Mencken to be mistaken in still another way. Every line, except the last two, states nothing but objective facts. Will Mencken deny that the year is recurrently at the spring, or that the sun rises again and again to make daylight, or that seven o'clock strikes every day? The poet does not always fly away from objective facts. But surely he does not stay locked up in them. As I remarked, he takes them as symbols—pointers, peep-holes, glimmerings of a greater concealed Reality—and he drives home, mightily or softly, to our souls his symbol-sense of that Reality and occasionally his touch on it. And the means by which he drives them home are a felicity of vivid phrase and a felicity of harmonious rhythm.

Even the other quotation which in itself may be felt as dogmatically re-

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sonant becomes a natural cry of triumph in its proper context. As far as I recollect, the piece in which they occur were written by William Ernest Henley in hospital after a serious accident which robbed him of one of his legs. It is entitled *Invictus*, which is the Latin for "Unconquered". Listen to all the stanzas :

Out of the night that covers me,
Black as the Pit from pole to pole,
I thank whatever gods may be
For my unconquerable soul.

In the fell clutch of circumstance
I have not winced nor cried aloud.
Under the bludgeonings of chance
My head is bloody, but unbowed.

Beyond this place of wrath and tears
Looms but the horror of the shade,
And yet the menace of the years
Finds, and shall find, me unafraid.

It matters not how strait the gate,
How charged with punishments the scroll,
I am the master of my fate :
I am the captain of my soul.

We can see clearly that Henley is not declaring himself to be possessed of a power that can do anything and everything. He does not boast that he can alter the whole world's course or make his soul accomplish whatever it wants with events or people. He is simply putting on record in the midst of appalling misfortunes the courage within him. Whether any gods have infused this courage into his being or whether it is something that is his own he does not know, but if it is a gift he is grateful for it. All that he knows is that nothing can make him afraid or break down in spirit. External Nature may be cruel, the path of his life may be full of blows, the hidden Powers beyond life and Nature may have decreed difficulties and dooms for him : all these things still leave him with his own self under control. Neither painful life nor grim death, neither present troubles nor future tribulations can take away from him his self-mastery, the resolve not to lament, the refusal to fear, the ability to command his own response to adverse circumstances. And the manifesto of his

courage is worked out in a series of progressive affirmations. When we come to the end we feel the conclusion as a correct summing-up with no unnatural flamboyance or brag : it is a strong simple straightforward statement that has no false note nor any ring of foolishness. The suspicion of a touch of arbitrary absoluteness in it disappears when we reach the closing lines through the imaginative and rhythmic logic of the brave beauty lifting its voice in the preceding four stanzas.

But perhaps the quarrel between Mencken and poetry is a matter of two different tempers, two different views of the function of speech. Whatever poetry might say would be taken in a different light by a man who did not see or feel poetically from inside him. He and the poet talk dissimilar languages, and the poet's purport, the spirit in which he has spoken are as if in a foreign tongue whose inner nuances and significant turns are missed by one who approaches it with half-knowledge as well as with another bent of mind than the speaker's. Do you know how a certain Armenian interpreted the famous Biblical phrase that reads in English : "The spirit is willing but the flesh is weak" ? This foreigner expressed his understanding of it thus : "The whiskey is good but the meat is rotten."

AMAL KIRAN

SRI AUROBINDO'S *VASAVADUTTA*

(SOME IMPRESSIONS)

WHEN we look between the lines of *Vasavadutta* we find our outer eyes challenged by our inner sight. In the light of the former, *Vasavadutta* is merely a love-play, at times with emotion and passion to the extreme. But, according to our deeper vision, although it is a love-play, the pertinent question is : love of what kind ? And the answer is: an ideal love, a love psychic.

Vasavadutta was born with unparalleled beauty and wealth both within and without. We see that in the poet's imagination *Vasavadutta* is a synonym for Luxmie herself. Udayan, *ahas* *Vuthsa*, we can at once say, is the symbol of the Soul in terms of romantic and idealistic ambition. Even long before they came into contact an ideal attraction had compelled their hearts to an inner love straining towards union.

Vuthsa

A name of leaping sweetness I have heard !
One day I shall behold a marvellous face
And hear heaven's harps defeated by a voice.

Vasavadutta

O my happiness !
O *Vuthsa*, only name that's sweet on earth.
I have murmured to the silence of the hours,
Give me delight, let me endure thy clasp
For ever. O loveliest head on all the earth !

Mahasegu, the father of *Vasavadutta* and *Gopalaca*, wanted to march across and lord it over the giant breast of the earth. But his might had to suffer a curb. *Gopalaca*, who knew not the meaning of fear, was the pioneer in ushering peace between the two kingdoms—*Avunthie* and *Cowsambie*. To be sure, we shall be far from the truth if we say that he played Udayan false. The redeeming feature of his ruse was a *bonafide* love for Udayan. He says to *Vasavadutta* :

VASAVADUTTA

My love for both.
.....my heart
Possessed him long before my hands have seized.
Then love him well, for so thou lov'st me twice.

To his father, Mahasegu :

My father, hear me. Though quite contrary
To all our planned design this thing has fallen,
Yet no dishonour tarnishes the deed,
But as a hero with a hero's child
Has Vuthsa seized the girl. We planned a snare,
He by a noble violence answers us.
We sought to bribe him to a vassal's state
Dangling the jewel of our house in front,
He keeps his freedom and enjoys the gem.
Then since we chose the throw of dice and lost,
Let us be noble gamblers, like a friend
Receive God's hostile chance, nor house blind wounded thoughts
As common natures might. Sanction this rapt;
Let there be love 'twixt Vuthsa's house and us.

On the eve of entering into a treaty with Udayan his fervent claim ran :

.....Only one claim Avunthie keeps;
My sister shall sit throned thy only queen,—
Which, pardon me, my eyes must witness done
With honour to our name.

To our wide surprise even when Udayan could not consent but
said :

Cowsambie's majesty
Will brook not even in this, Gopalaca,
A foreign summons.
.....this claim
Urge not, my brother.....

in reply the prince of Avunthie cried out :

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Let not this divide us.
The present's gladness is enough; the future's hers
And thine, Udayan, nor shall any man
Compel thee.

Indeed, do we not notice a colossal sacrifice by Gopalaca from the beginning to the end to bring about peace ?

Ungarica was very prudent and intelligent. When Mahasegu confided the secret to her that he got Udayan captured, she wanted to know of what use would he be to him. "I want to make a moon of him to shine upon my eastern dominions," so said Mahasegu. Ungarica threw cold water on him saying that Udayan was superior to him in every respect and would not yield to his pressure however unbearable. The king wanted the reason. The queen said, "When you conquered me, you had followed your swabhava and swadharma but in kidnapping the prince you have done otherwise. You cannot hope to succeed." She further pointed out to him that it was not apposite on his part to expect Vasavadutta to make use of her sentiment of love for his political ends. While giving instructions to Vasavadutta she said :

My child, the flower blooms for its flowerhood only
And not to make its parent bed more high.
Not for thy sire thy mother brought thee forth,
But thy dear nature's growth and heart's delight.

*

*

My child, let him who clasps thee be thy god
That thou mayst be his goddess ; let your wedded arms
Be heaven ; let his will be thine and thine
Be his, his happiness thy regal pomp.

Ungarica highly appreciated the spirit of chivalry in her younger son, Vicurna, who found it beneath royal dignity and considered it an abysmal shame to keep a hero like Udayan in captivity instead of subduing him by proud war. Truth to tell, he was a Kshatriya from head to foot. He wanted to set Udayan at large in defiance of his stern father. He actually helped Udayan in his final escape.

Munjoolica was the daughter of Sourashtra and her original name was Bandhumathie. Udayan asked her :

VASAVADUTTA

Thou wast then Sourashtra's child ?

Her immediate reply is :

I am still that royalty clouded, even as thou art
Captive Cowsambie. Me Gopalaca
In battle seized, brought a disdainful gift
To Vasavadutta.

The sparks of her royalty manifest themselves in her words to Vasavadutta :

How didst thou dare, proud girl,
To make of kings and princesses thy slaves ?
How dare to drag Sourashtra's daughter here,
To keep her as thy servant and to load
With gifts, caresses, chidings and commands,
The puppet of thy sweet imperious will ?
Thinkest thou my heart within me was not hot ?
But now I am avenged on thee and all.

In her dilemma Vasavadutta appeals to Munjoolica :

Remember I soothed thy fallen life
Which might have been so hard. O thou my playmate,
Joy, servant, sister who has always been,.....

At the same time we are not to overlook Munjoolica's gratefulness. When Udayan desired to make Munjoolica an ally, he said :

Since our fates are one,
Should we not be allies ?

*

*

Wouldst thou have freedom ? wilt thou give me help?—

Munjoolica answers :

In nothing against her I love and serve.

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In *Vāsavadutta* we find the proem of Sri Aurobindo's philosophy. Udayan is the Spirit, under the colour of idealistic romance. Mahasegu Matter in blindness of tyrannical egotism. At length the Spirit has conquered Matter and founded its all-embracing ecstasy here on earth in place of an all-crushing strength.

Let us now conclude with some of the beautiful concluding lines of the poet, rather the master-dramatist.

VUTHSA

.....Thou art Luxmie. Thou beside me, Fate
And Fortune, peace and battle must obey
The vagrant lightest-winged of my desires.

*

*

...Love, the storm is past,
The peril o'er. Now we shall glide, my queen,
Through green-gold woods and between golden fields
To float for ever in a golden dream,
O earth's gold Luxmie, till the shining gates
Eternal open to us thy heavenly home.

CHINMOY

THE TEMPLE

My Being is a Temple offered to the Lord,
In the Heart's deep recess does He dwell ;
In that inmost chamber with closed doors,
Steadily burns a Truth-Spark guarded well.

In an upper chamber, that of the Mind,
For long hours He is at work ,
In the glow of a gloriously radiant Blue Light,
Undivine forces here dare not lurk.

My Life-force too is His faithful slave,
Patiently the Soul awaits its turn
To be brought forward Him to serve,
My Ego as fuel He can burn.

To keep this Temple spotlessly clean,
I work hard day and night
To scrub away all impurities,
And keep it forever bright.

Perhaps my knocking He will hear some day,
And open that closed door,
To reveal the hidden Light within,
When its Glow Divine I am ready to endure.

TIM

A PRAYER

Speak to me, Mother, that I may speak
In living echoes of Thy tone ;
As Thou hast sought, so let me seek
Thy erring children lost and lone.

O teach me, Mother, that I may teach
The precious things Thou dost impart ;
And wing my words, that they may reach
The hidden depths of many a heart.

O fill me with Thy fullness, Mother,
Until my very heart o'erflow
In kindling thought and glowing word,
Thy love to tell, Thy light to show.

SUDHANGSHU BHUSAN PAL CHOUDHURY

ON THE VERGE

THE Dawn lingered,
Behind the mountain tops.
The clouds paused ;
The breeze in rhythmic steps
Danced in the valley,
Stealing the fragrance of the herbs
And the scent of the lotus.

The skies were strewn,
With a million stars.
A silence hung,
As if straining in expectancy
Of a distant song.

The waters of the tank
Were warm, serene,
Lighted by a shower of stars.

In that sacred hour,
When heavens hold communion
With the dreamy earth,
My soul was awakened.

It gazed,
Beyond the mountain tops
And the vast horizons.
The hills, the snows,
The sacred peaks,
Nay, Space itself,
Beckoned to it.

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The skies stretched their arms,
The trees called,
The Beyond beckoned,
With all its love.
A strange yearning
To melt my soul
In this divine dawn
Was born.
Aroused, it ran
About and about,
And smote with all its might
On the prison bars
That had held it for a million yugas.
The noise echoed
From the cage
To the endless universe.

Then a great Doubt,
Like the lone morning star
That hung upon the skies,
Hung on my heart.

Hesitating it lay,
Like the borderline
Between Life false
And Life Real.

A. R. SHENOY

STUDIES OF SHAKESPEARE'S PLAYS

STUDY No. 1. *THE TEMPEST*

(A) GENERAL INTRODUCTION

(1) THE WORKS OF SHAKESPEARE

THE pith of the works of Shakespeare, excluding the poems and the Sonnets, will be treated by us under four heads, namely, the plays of light, the plays of the twilight period, the plays of the dark period, and the plays of the historical period. The plays of light cover *The Tempest*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *The Merchant of Venice*, *The Twelfth Night*, and *As you like it*. These are touched by a certain delicacy and contain the highest reach of the Shakespearean imagination. The plays of the twilight period introduce the tragic note in *Romeo and Juliet*, *Antony and Cleopatra*, and *Julius Caesar*. The plays of the dark period, *Macbeth*, *Hamlet*, *Othello*, and *King Lear* rise to the supreme height of tragic experience. The historical plays, which on the whole are on a lower level, are represented by *Henry IV* and *Richard II*. These fourteen plays are selective and present the essence of the works of Shakespeare. The Sonnets and the Poems will be dealt with separately.

The Tempest is the point of equilibrium in the works of Shakespeare. The plays of light swing towards joy, those of the twilight and dark periods to sadness or tragedy, the historical plays to realism. *The Tempest* moves naturally to a close of serenity and repose.

(2) THE DATE AND SOURCE OF *The Tempest*

The Tempest is generally thought to have been acted for the first time in 1611 and to have been again acted in 1612-1613 in honour of the betrothal of Princess Elizabeth, daughter of James I, to Frederick the Prince Palatine Elector. The source of *The Tempest* is said to be the wreck of a ship mentioned in Silvester Jourdain's *A Discovery of the Bermudas*. This is, however, guess work of the scholars. A new orientation of Shakespearean studies is necessary today. Speculation as to the date of *The Tempest* and its supposed sources tend

to distract us from the interpretation of the text. *The Tempest* is a work of art and must stand or fall on its own merits. Conjectures are of little help. The imposition of fact upon a work of the imagination hinders true appreciation. There are no ships, no magic island, no Prospero or Ariel factually in *The Tempest*. These are the creatures of the Shakespearean fancy which, to use the words of *The Tempest*, when the revel is ended, melt into thin air. A factual approach to *The Tempest* is faulty at its inception. The world of *The Tempest* is the world of the subtle Sylph Ariel, the occultist Prospero, and the elemental Caliban. These are airy nothings which are a truth in the realm of the imagination. The factual interpretation of *The Tempest* must therefore be substituted by a fresh occult rendering.

(B) OCCULT INTERPRETATION OF *The Tempest*

The Tempest is the life history of the White Magician Prospero. His study of the occult leads him to entrust the administration of his Kingdom in Milan to his brother Antonio who usurps his throne and drives him and his daughter into exile and death. Prospero and Miranda, then a baby in arms, are put into a boat with scant provisions upon the seas. Gonzalo the chief minister, however, secretly smuggles occult books into the boat. Antonio, with the help of Alonso and Sebastian of the kingdom of Naples, gains his throne. The waves protect Prospero and Miranda who drift to an island, swept by the power of the Black Magician Sycorax. Exiled from Arbiers on account of her practice of Black magic, arrived on the enchanted Isle, she imprisoned in the trunk of a tree the Spirit of Light disobedient to her command, Ariel, and, dying, left her child Caliban. Prospero, relying on the formulas of his occult books, releases Ariel from his captivity and chains Caliban. The enchanted Isle comes under the spell of Prospero, and is purified of the bad magnetism of Sycorax. The sole reminder of the black magic of Sycorax that remains is Caliban. He also is brought into a state of nascent animal humanity by the teaching of the White Magician. The planetary position brings Alonso, his son Ferdinand, and Gonzalo to the coast of the enchanted Isle. Prospero is thus the central subject of *The Tempest*. The power which he wields is lightning, intelligent, active, invisible, of which the spirit Ariel is the receptacle and instrument. The entire action of *The Tempest* runs upon lines of invisible Force radiating from Prospero through the agency of Ariel. The storm in the first Act, which splits the ship of Alonso, is not real. It is an illusory effect caused by Prospero. The ships, as is seen later in the play, are safe together with their occupants. The tempest of the first Act is a prelude to the serenity of the last Act. The vessel is apparently wrecked ; Ferdinand is

separated. He is drawn to Miranda by the secret action of Prospero. Once he is within his cell, the radiation of true love is thrown into the eyes of both Miranda and Ferdinand.

This is the first step in the reconciliation between Antonio, Prospero and his enemies. The second action of Prospero is to provide protection both of Alonso and himself. Everything within the island is within the view of Prospero and his minister Ariel. He checks, through Ariel, the conspiracy of Sebastian and Antonio to kill Alonso and Gonzalo. Alonso and his party also are drawn by magnetic action into the circle of the cell of Prospero. There their past is exposed ; Alonso, Antonio and the rest are unmasked. Their crime of exile, usurpation, and attempted murder of Prospero and Miranda, is put before them. The conspiracy of Sebastian to slay Alonso and Gonzalo is brought to light. By another movement of the force of Prospero, Caliban and his fellow conspirators intent to kill him are driven to the magnetic ring of his cell. There their conspiracy is also unearthed. All the criminals stand within the power of the beneficent Magician. His action is not revenge, but forgiveness and liberation. The law of white magic is Love, and in the marriage of Ferdinand and Miranda the kingdom of Milan is restored to the children of Prospero and Alonso. Ariel and Caliban are freed. Sebastian and Stephano are forgiven. Prospero, too, realising from experience of occult studies that magic itself, however applied to the benefit of humanity, must itself be transcended, buries his magic books and disperses his secret powers. He seeks in the ascent of Spirit, in holy retirement, the exercise of beneficence superior to the potency of magic.

(To be continued)

SYED MEHDI IMAM