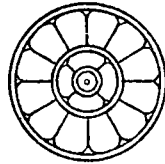


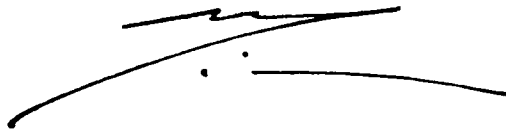
MOTHER INDIA

APRIL 24, 1960

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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. XII

No. 3

"Great is Truth and it shall prevail"

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AN ANSWER TO A REQUEST

It is not from disgust for life and people that one must come to yoga.

It is not to run away from difficulties that one must come here.

It is not even to find the sweetness of love and protection, for the Divine's love and protection can be enjoyed everywhere if one takes the right attitude.

When one wants to give oneself totally in service to the Divine, to consecrate oneself totally to the Divine's work, simply for the joy of giving oneself and of serving, without asking for anything in exchange, except the possibility of consecration and service, then one is ready to come here and will find the doors wide open.

I give you the blessings given to all my children wherever they are in the world and tell you, "Prepare yourself, my help will always be with you."

30-3-1960

THE MOTHER

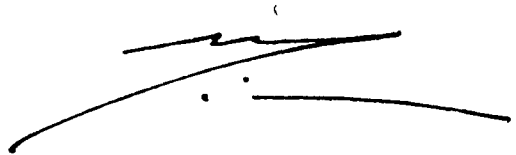
WORDS OF THE MOTHER

Q. What is the significance of the tune that goes on repeating itself in your music so often ?

You must have noticed that this tune generally comes after some trouble or chaos has been expressed. It comes as a solution to a problem. It means an advancement, a progress, a step forward in consciousness. It comes as an enlightenment. My music resembles the inner movements of the Sadhana. Sometimes a trouble, a chaos, a problem, a wrong movement which seemed conquered returns with a greater force. But then, as an answer or as an aid, the growth, the unveiling of the consciousness—and then the final enlightenment.

This music is very difficult to understand—specially for the Western mind. To people from the West it often means nothing; nor do they easily feel in them the corresponding movements. Mostly those who can appreciate the Indian Ragas can like that music; for there is some resemblance with the Ragas. But here too from the point of view of form, all conventions of musical laws and notations are broken.

30-10-1957.



GUIDANCE FROM SRI AUROBINDO

PHYSICAL WORK AND THE HIGHER FORCE

SELF : I fail to make out why my feet remain constantly fatigued even after sleep. Is not sleep a means to relax everything ?

SRI AUROBINDO : I think you had forced yourself too physically by mental will and vital insistence on the body—the present fatigue is partly at least the result.

6-3-1935

SELF : To day I cannot write to you anything more. There is too great a restlessness.

SRI AUROBINDO : At this rate the best thing would be not to force yourself in any way for sadhana or anything else, but to rest as much as possible, read, do ordinary but not excessive work, sleep well and get back the right equilibrium of the physical consciousness in which the deeper quiet can come back.

7-3-1935

SELF : Let me explain to you why I have forced myself to a good amount of work. It was for five reasons. The first is : I see that there are so many sadhaks here who work hard and nearly for ten to twelve hours a day—workers like Khirod, Rishabhachand and others.

SRI AUROBINDO : These men and others are born workers. But even so the Mother has had to discourage this excessive tendency to work with many because their bodies could not bear it.

SELF : The second reason : I was told that there is always a tendency to inertia in my external being and decided that the only way to get rid of it was by making the body work more and more for the Mother.

SRI AUROBINDO : Overstraining only increases the inertia—the mental and vital will may force the body, but the body feels more and more strained and finally asserts itself. It is only if the body itself feels a will and force to work that one can do that.

8-3-1935

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SELF : Thirdly, I presumed that by working more and more I shall be able to bring out love and rása in the work.

SRI AUROBINDO : You cannot bring love and rása merely by increasing work. These are inward things and depend on the inner being.

SELF : Fourthly, it is said that for fatigue or inertia the best thing is not to indulge it by allowing the body to rest more, but to work and work until it goes.

SRI AUROBINDO : It may be so—by working more and *bringing more force in the body*—but not by working too much which only increases the fatigue.

SELF : The fifth and last reason : I heard that the fatigue comes because there is in our nature some unwillingness to work, for otherwise, how is it that many people work day and night and yet are untouched by exertion or tamás ?

SRI AUROBINDO : Because they feel the force for work.

8-3-1935

SELF : Someone told me that when the peace descends into the inner vital much sleep is not necessary. Well, I have felt the peace descending. So why should I indulge in sleep for so many hours instead of doing something for the Mother ?

SRI AUROBINDO : That someone announces a most dangerous doctrine. To sleep enough (not too much) is essential.

SELF : The fundamental cause is after all the weakness of my body. It has been so since childhood. Even a little extra activity exhausts me.

SRI AUROBINDO : The weakness of the body has to be cured, not disregarded. It can only be cured by bringing in strength from above, not by merely forcing the body.

SELF : I neglected all the defects of the physical, leaving them to be dealt with by the Mother and engrossed myself in her work as much as a strong man. In a spiritual Ashram, should not one be full of an adventurous spirit, ready to take up even a stupendous work ?

It was towards this ideal that I was trying to develop my physical self. But, really, I was not aware that my attempt had only a mental will and vital insistence in its push. Please give me your guidance.

GUIDANCE FROM SRI AUROBINDO

SRI AUROBINDO : The first rule is—there must be sufficient sleep and rest, not in excess but not too little.

The body must be trained to work, but not strained beyond its utmost capacity.

The outer means without the inner is not effective. Up to a certain point by a *progressive* training the body may be made more capable of work. But the important thing is to bring down the force for work and the rasa of work in the body. The body will then do what is asked of it without grudging or feeling fatigue.

Even so, even when the force and rasa are there, one must keep one's sense of measure.

Work is a means of self-dedication to the Divine, but it must be done with the necessary inner consciousness in which the outer¹ vital and physical also share.

A lazy body is certainly not a proper instrument for Yoga—it must stop being lazy. But a fatigued and unwilling body also cannot receive properly or be a good instrument. The proper thing is to avoid either extreme.

8-3-1935

(From NAGIN DOSHI)

¹ Uncertain reading (Editor).

SRI AUROBINDO ON INDIA'S DESTINY

(The readers of Mother India may find the following extracts from an article by Sri Aurobindo which appeared in his Karmayogin of the 25th September 1909, of considerable interest in the light of current projects regarding India's future.)

THE PAST AND THE FUTURE

To recover Indian thought, Indian character, Indian perceptions, Indian energy, Indian greatness, and to solve the problems that perplex the world in an Indian spirit and from the Indian standpoint, this, in our view, is the mission of Nationalism. We agree with Dr. Coomaraswamy that an exclusive preoccupation with politics and economics is likely to dwarf our growth and prevent the flowering of originality and energy. We have to return to the fountainheads of our ancient religion, philosophy, art and literature and pour the revivifying influences of our immemorial Aryan spirit and ideals into our political and economic development...

The debasement of our mind, character and tastes by a grossly commercial, materialistic and insufficient European education is a fact on which the young Nationalism has always insisted. The practical destruction of our artistic perceptions and the plastic skill and fineness of eye and hand which once gave our productions pre-eminence, distinction and mastery of the European markets, is also a thing accomplished. Most vital of all, the spiritual and intellectual divorce from the past which the present schools and universities have effected, has beggared the nation of the originality, high aspiration and forceful energy which can alone make a nation free and great.

To reverse the process and recover what we have lost, is undoubtedly the first object to which we ought to devote ourselves. And as the loss of originality, aspiration and energy was the most vital of all these losses, so their recovery should be our first and most important objective. The primary aim of the prophets of Nationalism was to rid the nation of the idea that the future was limited by the circumstances of the present, that because temporary causes had brought us low and made us weak, low therefore must be our aims and weak our methods. They pointed the mind of the people to a great and splendid destiny, not in some distant millennium but in the comparatively near future, and fired the hearts of the young men with a burning desire to realise the

apocalyptic vision. As a justification of what might otherwise have seemed a dream and as an inexhaustible source of energy and inspiration, they pointed persistently to the great achievements and grandiose civilisation of our forefathers and called on the rising generation to recover their lost spiritual and intellectual heritage. It cannot be denied that this double effort to realise the past and the future has been the distinguishing temperament and the chief uplifting force in the movement and it cannot be denied that it is bringing back to our young men originality, aspiration and energy...

To raise the mind, character and tastes of the people, to recover the ancient nobility of temper, the strong Aryan character and the high Aryan outlook, the perceptions which made earthly life beautiful and wonderful, and the magnificent spiritual experiences, realisations and aspirations which made us the deepest-hearted, deepest-thoughted and most delicately profound in life of all the peoples of the earth, is the task next in importance and urgency. We had hoped by means of National Education to effect this great object as well as to restore to our youth the intellectual heritage of the nation and build up on that basis a yet greater culture in the future. We must admit that the instrument which we cherished and for which such sacrifices were made, has proved insufficient and threatens, in unfit hands, to lose its promise of fulfilment and be diverted to lower ends. But the movement is greater than its instruments. We must strive to prevent the destruction of that which we have created and, in the meanwhile, build up a centre of culture, freer and more perfect, which will either permeate the other with itself or replace it if destroyed. Finally, the artistic awakening has been commenced by that young, living and energetic school which has gathered round the Master and originator, Sri Abanindranath Tagore. The impulse which this school is giving, its inspired artistic recovery of the past, its intuitive anticipations of the future, have to be popularised and made a national possession...

But no movement, however vigorous, can throw off in a few years the effects of a whole century. We must remember also why the degradation and denationalisation, "the mighty evil in our soul", came into being. A painful but necessary work had to be done, and because the English nation were the fittest instrument for his purpose, God led them all over those thousands of miles of alien Ocean, gave strength to their hearts and subtlety to their brains, and set them up in India to do His work, which they have been doing faithfully, if blindly, ever since and are doing at the present moment. The spirit and ideals of India had come to be confined in a mould which, however beautiful, was too narrow and slender to bear the mighty burden of our future. When that happens, the mould has to be broken and even the ideal lost for a while, in order to be recovered free of constraint and limitation.

MOTHER INDIA

We have to recover the Aryan spirit and ideal and keep it intact but enshrined in new forms and more expansive institutions. We have to treasure jealously everything in our social structure, manners, institutions, which is of permanent value, essential to our spirit or helpful to the future; but we must not cabin the expanding and aggressive spirit of India in temporary forms which are the creation of the last few hundred years. That would be a vain and disastrous endeavour. The mould is broken; we must remould in larger outlines and with a richer content. For the work of destruction England was best fitted by her stubborn individuality and by that very commercialism and materialism which made her the anti-type in temper and culture of the race she governed. She was chosen too for the unrivalled efficiency and skill with which she has organised an individualistic and materialistic democracy. We had to come to close quarters with that democratic organisation, draw it into ourselves and absorb the democratic spirit and methods so that we might rise beyond them. Our half-aristocratic half-theocratic feudalism had to be broken, in order that the democratic spirit of the Vedanta might be released and by absorbing all that is needed of the aristocratic and theocratic culture, create for the Indian race a new and powerful political and social organisation.

We have to learn and use the democratic principle and methods of Europe, in order that hereafter we may build up something more suited to our past and to the future of humanity. We have to throw away the individualism and materialism and keep the democracy. We have to solve for the human race the problem of harmonising and spiritualising its impulses towards liberty, equality and fraternity....

For another reason also England was chosen, because she had organised the competitive system of commerce, with its bitter and murderous struggle for existence, in the most skilful, discreet and successful fashion. We had to feel the full weight of that system and learn the literal meaning of this industrial realisation of Darwinism. It has been written large for us in ghastly letters of famine, chronic starvation and misery and a decreasing population. We have risen at last, entered into the battle and with the Boycott for a weapon, are striking at the throat of British commerce even as it struck at ours, first by protection and then by free trade. Again it is not out of hatred that we strike, but out of self-preservation. We must conquer in that battle if we are to live. We cannot arrest our development of industry and commerce while waiting for a new commercial system to develop or for beauty and art to reconquer the world. As in politics so in commerce, we must learn and master the European methods in order that we may eventually rise above them...

A nation need not be luxuriously wealthy in order to be profoundly artistic, but it must have a certain amount of well-being, a national culture and, above

SRI AUROBINDO ON INDIA'S DESTINY

all, hope and ardour, if it is to maintain a national art based on a wide-spread development of artistic perception and faculty. Moreover, aesthetic arts and crafts cannot live against the onrush of cheap and vulgar manufactures under the conditions of the modern social structure. Industry can only become again beautiful if poverty and the struggle for life are eliminated from society and the co-operative State and commune organised as the fruit of a great moral and spiritual uplifting of humanity. We hold such an uplifting and reorganisation as part of India's mission. But to do her work she must live. Therefore the economical preoccupation has been added to the political.

We perceive the salvation of the country not in parting with either of these, but in adding to them a religious and moral preoccupation. On the basis of that religious and moral awakening the preoccupation of art and fine culture will be added and firmly based. There are many who perceive the necessity of the religious and moral regeneration, who are inclined to turn from the prosaic details of politics and commerce and regret that any guide and teacher of the nation should stoop to mingle in them. That is a grievous error. The men who would lead India must be catholic and many-sided.

When the Avatar comes, we like to believe that he will be not only the religious guide, but the political leader, the great educationist, the regenerator of society, the captain of co-operative industry, with the soul of the poet, scholar and artist. He will be in short the summary and grand type of the future Indian nation which is rising to reshape and lead the world.

SRI AUROBINDO

INDIAN PAINTING

SRI AUROBINDO

(Translated by Niranjan from the Bengali essay in "Dharma O Jatiyata")

ALL Western and Eastern nations have been obliged to admit that our Mother India was an imperishable treasure-house of knowledge, spirituality, art and literature. But formerly Europe was under the impression that Indian painting was not so highly developed as our literature and other arts but was horrible and devoid of beauty. We too, enlightened by European knowledge and looking through European glasses, turned up our noses at the sight of Indian painting and sculpture, thus demonstrating our refined intellect and irreproachable taste. The mansions of the rich became filled with Greek statues and things in the "cast" of English paintings or their lifeless imitations, even the walls of the houses of ordinary people were decorated with frightful oil-paintings. The Indians whose taste and skill in art had been unmatched in the world, the Indians whose choice of colour and form had been naturally faultless, the same people grew blind, lost the intellectual capacity for seizing the inner significance and developed a taste even worse than that of an Italian labourer. Raja Ravi Varma was acclaimed the best Indian artist.

However, recently, thanks to the efforts of some art-lovers, the eyes of the Indians are opening and they are beginning to appreciate their own skill and their own vast wealth of art forms. Animated and inspired by the extraordinary genius of Sri Abanindranath Tagore, a few young men are resurrecting the lost art of Indian painting. By virtue of their talent a new age is being ushered in Bengal. After this, one may expect, that India, instead of looking through the eyes of the English, will see with her own eyes and, discarding the imitations of the West, depend upon her own clear intellect and once again express the eternal thoughts of India through colour and form.

There are two reasons for the Europeans' dislike of Indian painting. They say Indian painters are incapable of imitating Nature : instead of drawing a man like a man, a horse like a horse, a tree like a tree, they draw deformed images; they have no perspective, the pictures appear flat and unnatural. The Europeans' second objection used to be that all these pictures lack beauty of form and feeling. This objection is no longer in their mouths. When they saw the incomparable

INDIAN PAINTING

serenity in our ancient images of Buddha and the radiance of supernal power in our ancient statues of Durga, they were charmed and stupefied. The greatest acknowledged art-critics of England have admitted that the Indian painter might not know the perspective of Europe, but the Indian laws of perspective were very beautiful, complete and reasonable. It is true, the Indian painter or other artist does not imitate the external world, but not because he lacks the capacity : his aim is to go beyond the outward scene and appearance and express the inner feeling and truth. The external shape is only a robe, a disguise of the inner truth—we lose ourselves in the beauty of the mask and cannot seize what is hidden within. Therefore, Indian painters deliberately modified the outer form in order to make it more suitable for expressing the inner truth. One is amazed to see how beautifully they express the inner truth of a mental state, or of an event, in each limb, in the environment, attitude and dress. This, indeed, is the main characteristic of Indian painting, its highest development.

The West is busy with the false external perception, they are devotees of the shadow. The East seeks the inner truth, we are devotees of the eternal. The West worships the body, we worship the soul. The West is in love with name and form, we can never be satisfied unless we get to the eternal object. This difference is evident everywhere : as in religion, philosophy and literature, so in painting and architecture.

YOGA IN THE MATERIAL FIELD

PONDICHERRY is growing by rapid strides. Visitors who saw the town some fifteen years ago will be surprised at the remarkable development that has taken place in every sphere of its life. Let them take a walk along the sea boulevard on the extreme east or over the barren hill-side of the lake on the west, among the beautiful new buildings on tidy streets and roads: they will be impressed with an almost magical change in the once dirty and dead colony

Not a little of this change is due to the influence of the Sri Aurobindo Ashram. Today tiny Pondicherry has acquired a place on the world-map with the Ashram as its cultural centre. All sorts of people from India and abroad including ministers, high officials, men of culture are constantly streaming in and carrying away with them a new vision of life. How the Ashram also contributes to the material welfare of the town can be realised from the present story. This story is about a very practical piece of work resulting from the Yogic life pursued in the Ashram under the guidance of the Mother.

One day a gentleman accosted me and said, "Are you Nirod? I come from East Africa. I have wanted to meet you, for I heard Sri Aurobindo telling me in a dream your name which I never knew before. Since then I have been wondering who this person could be."

Now I was a-stir with curiosity. Sri Aurobindo speaking of me to some one in East Africa! He continued: "You see, one of your group had come over there on a visit. All of us Indians wanted to meet and know something about the Ashram. I invited several people to my house. It was just before this occasion that I heard Sri Aurobindo saying, 'If Nirod were here, he would manage everything. You would have no trouble.'" After a few friendly words we parted. I was very much struck with the strangeness of the incident.

This was two or three years ago. Later, he paid frequent visits to the Ashram, accompanied by some members of his family till almost all had the blessings of the Mother. His old mother who was suffering from chronic ailments of all sorts and had tried every kind of remedy, even talismans, gave up all human cures after seeing the Mother. One day we learnt that he was planning to start a sugar factory in Pondicherry. Another day we heard that the Mother was going to lay its foundation-stone! Things seemed to be moving fast. I discovered then the *à propos* of Guru's visitation.

As we expressed a desire to see his mill-construction, he warmly agreed. One Sunday, after a swift drive of ten miles, we touched upon the sugarcane

YOGA IN THE MATERIAL FIELD

plantations with their typical green blade-like leaves waving in the air, and through the hedge-holes the ruddy robust stalks attracted our senses with their promise of sweet juice. "Here begins our land," said the host, "fifty acres on this side and another fifty on the other side of the factory; you see some of the fields being prepared for the June crop. Here is the signboard. The factory has been christened by the Mother, 'The Sacur Sugar Factory.' The word 'sacur' has been derived from the Tamil word for sugar and from Ariyur, the name of the village."

As we entered the site, we saw, shining in the bright sun, the skeletal frame of a huge steel structure, while the other wing set perpendicular to it had its body and roof covered with asbestos sheets. On the left side some buildings meant for store houses were almost complete. Far on the outer rings could be seen some silhouettes.

The host took us round and showed where the Mother had laid the foundation-stone with the message, "Faithfulness is the sure basis of success", inscribed upon it. He read to us the other part of the message :

A happy beginning,
A good continuation,
And no end—
An endless progression.

"A very potent message, like a mantra," I said, "linking the two lives together—the life of the owner and that of the owned."

Then he began explaining to us the various stages of sugar production, showing at the same time where the sugarcanes would be crushed, where the juice would be collected, boiled, refined and finally crystallised. Through the maze of all these technical intricacies a vision of hundreds of people engaged profitably, fed by the mill, floated before my eyes. Even the sadhakas and sadhikas might be working side by side with the mill-hands, but with a different inspiration and consciousness, helping thus to bring a new orientation into the life of the workers. Factories there are many in the country, but meeting the mere demands of the stomach is not the greatest problem of existence.

He then led us on to the outer ring destined to be the quarters for the officers. A series of small modern flats with two rooms for each family were being erected in a line. Then would follow the quarters of the officers of the higher rank and finally those of the highest ones. Clubs, schools, libraries, playgrounds, swimming pools, in a word, all human considerations adding enjoyment to utility will have their due place.

As we returned to the Office, we saw two big photos of the Mother and

MOTHER INDIA

Sri Aurobindo installed there. Our host said that he was building a suite of rooms for the Mother, so that if she ever chose to stay at the place she could have full privacy. As he regretted that perhaps we had not enjoyed the trip, we replied that apart from a Wordsworthian education in the sunny fields, we had seen the beginning of a big project. In life, the beginning and the end are the points that matter. Then we requested him to tell us how he had conceived this “unrealistic” project of starting a factory at Pondicherry.

“Well, it is a long story,” he said. “In fact, it is not I, but the Mother who gave me the idea and pushed me into it, so to say. You have seen the Tamil Journal of the Government of Pondicherry where it says that we, ‘on the advice of the Divine Mother of Sri Aurobindo Ashram decided to start the above Factory.’ You know that we have our sugar factories in East Africa where we live. Somewhere in 1953, the gentleman I have mentioned before came to pay us a visit and dispelled all our wrong conceptions about the Ashram. We had heard that Sri Aurobindo used to live in seclusion while a European lady conducted some sort of an Ashram. He held a collective meditation with my family members and then a very unusual thing happened. As soon as we sat down, my mother went into a deep trance. This new phenomenon put us off, but we were assured that it was the descent of the Mother’s force and that there was nothing to be panicky about. Since then, my mother has been having extraordinary experiences of various kinds. One night, Sri Aurobindo appeared to me in a dream. He lay down on a sofa and while I was massaging his legs he was talking with me as if we had been fast friends for ages. Next day, there was to be a gathering in our house. It was in that context that I heard your name pronounced by Sri Aurobindo

“After a while I came for a short visit, for two days only. But the Mother, the Ashram, its bright children and new atmosphere made me prolong my stay. The Mother also sent word that if I extended my visit she would see me. When the day for the interview was fixed, I felt somewhat perturbed, for I had really nothing to speak about in particular. In the interview I was so much moved by her sweetness and grace that I talked my heart out. She inquired all about my family, my business and then startled me by saying that she had known me and had been always with me in my work. To my bewildered gaze, she answered smiling, ‘Yes, we have met before.’

“I went back to Africa. But the memory of that meeting exercised a sort of magnetic pull towards the Ashram. An idea flashed through my mind that I could very well start some factory in India. Things in Africa were also looking uncertain. On my second visit, my parents accompanied me; my father was very pleased to see an Ashram run very smoothly on modern lines. I told the Mother about my plan of buying the old Savana Mill in Pondicherry. She re-

YOGA IN THE MATERIAL FIELD

plied, 'No, that mill is not for you. Why don't you start a sugar mill, instead ? That would be in your line.' As I could not afford a huge sum of money, she added, 'Once you set it going, money will also pour in. Start without thinking too much. I will give all my help. I want also to show Yoga in the material field.'

"With a non-committal reply I took my leave. But the idea must have been transmitted with a certain force, for I could not reject it. After consultation with my family members, I tentatively agreed upon the project and, in my next visit, began to look for a site. At one time the difficulties became so great that I abandoned the idea and communicated to the Mother my regret. In addition to money matters, difficulties of import and export, Government taxes and other complications raised their heads to throw me out of joint. I felt so miserable that I resolved to have the matter thrashed out before her. In the interview, I made a staggering discovery. As I began to dilate upon the technical hurdles, I was surprised to see that the Mother could talk about finance, exchange, import, export, etc. as if she were a high-level expert Minister of the Government. Convinced by her arguments, I took the final decision and cabled to my people in East Africa to that effect. I flew to England and placed orders for the machinery. After two years of hard struggle I was ready to proceed with the construction. The work is perhaps moving slowly, but I expect it will finish by next June. As you will see in the Government Journal, the first nursery has grown to 600-700 acres of the second nursery. The seeds of the second nursery will be given to 2500 cultivators to cultivate about 6,000 acres of cane....It is anticipated to increase crushing capacity from 800-1200 tons to 1500 tons per day if the present attempt is successful.

"You see now how far the work has progressed. I had to face tremendous odds; in this remote corner facilities are lacking. But I have felt the Mother's helping hand smoothening, as it were, all the difficulties little by little and I have no doubt that everything will turn out all right. I do not pretend that what I am doing is something unique, but the experience I have been granted and the circumstances under which I am working are new and valuable, aren't they ? The Mother says she wants to show Yoga in the material field. That will certainly be something unique, I believe. This then is my story."

NIRODBARAN

ORIGINAL INDIAN THINKING ON SECONDARY EDUCATION IN RECENT TIMES

(Summary of the Khatri Memorial Lecture delivered at the All India Educational Conference held in December 1959.)

EDUCATION AND LIFE

EDUCATION is the soul of a people and a living people must have a living education—an education conscious of its aims and methods and the evolving conditions of life. In recent times, India has felt extremely dissatisfied with her education and has striven hard, very hard indeed, to re-create her education.

Her general pattern of education has been, on the whole, representative of the best traditions of European liberalism and that is what obtains in the greater part of the world. And yet her dissatisfaction has been deep. Since Independence, the pattern has had the consent of the Government and the people and it has been much modified too. But yet there is dissatisfaction in the midst of approval. It is an extremely intriguing situation. The fact perhaps is that it involves a deep conflict in the educational soul of the country. We are modern, but we have not ceased to be ancient. Our traditional soul longs for the intrinsic values of ultimate truth and reality, of selflessness and dedication—the moral and spiritual values. Our modern soul asks for the more practical and demonstrative values of utility, success, efficiency, expression and social progress. Even when our education is made competent by the modern standards, we are still dissatisfied. Is the problem of Indian education not a reconciliation, a synthesis of the two sets of values ? And is the same not today the problem of the general world education too ? We notice a great emphasis on “wholeness” in education, knowledge and culture in the West. What is that an indication of ? Is it not a demand for the intrinsic values in the midst of instrumental values, the absolute in the relative, the whole in the parts ? And is the crisis in contemporary life not essentially due to the lack of a sense, appreciation and enjoyment of the intrinsic values, the absolute and the whole in life and things ?

RECENT INDIAN THINKING

Recent India has sought to solve this problem of her education and of world culture with the keenest of interest. The greatest leaders of life and

thought felt drawn towards education and to make original experiments hoping thereby to find a solution of the problem. The most representative figures are Tagore, Gandhi, Vinoba and Sri Aurobindo. They have all had the deepest love for education and have been themselves teachers. It is interesting that in spite of the very characteristic and individual positions taken up by them there is a community of outlook on a number of points. There is in them a conscious continuity with the past, the cultural aspiration of the country. There is also a central emphasis on the moral and spiritual values of life. There is then an equally strong emphasis on the relation of education to the contemporary situation of life and the competence to live in the present. Further, there is a keen appreciation of the process of growth and its conditions. Freedom, joy, personal example of the teacher, power of the atmosphere and activity are heartily enjoyed as essential to educational life.

TAGORE

The distinctive standpoints of these educationist may be represented by the terms *sensibility*, *moral will* and the *psychic being*. Tagore wanted the school to be a place of joy, where through an intimate association of the teacher and the pupil in a setting of nature, the child should grow up into a joyous personality. Joy is, no doubt, an index of a harmonious growth and Tagore as a poet and an artist seems to have been profoundly impressed by the way of beauty and harmonious feelings to the fullness of life. Indeed, right feeling would imply right knowing and right willing. Truth, beauty and goodness are ultimately one. Sensibility may thus be used as the key-word to represent his way of education. Vishvabharati, the 'World University', which he founded in Shantiniketan was the experiment and the expression of this inspiration. The Poet worked long and devotedly at it and it became, indeed, an attraction for the world.

GANDHI

The key-word here should not be craft or practical activity, though in reaction to the over-literary character of the general Indian education this was emphasised a great deal. The right representative word of Gandhiji's educational thought should be 'the moral will'. His ideals of truth, non-violence and service sought to create individuals and human society of a quality and character involving high moral sensitivity and capability. This moral will is further supported by a faith in God and soul. The educational process, which is an embodiment of the educational maxim of 'learning by doing' and the principle of 'integration of lessons' is all a training of the moral will of the growing individual.

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Basic education, first propounded in 1937, bids fair to be the general pattern of education for the Primary stage in the country. It has undergone many modifications and its essential principles today enjoy wide acceptance, but its central emphasis is not the craft, but the will in personality and in will the moral motivation founded on a spiritual faith. And Basic Education, if it is to be true to Gandhiji's perceptions and remain sound psychologically and culturally, has to be vigilant about these ideals.

VINOBA

The Gandhian thought lives creatively most in Vinobaji. And he is so well established in that tradition that he can easily enlarge and modify it. He passionately seeks to create a new society and he has struck upon new lines of approach. But education is to him the indispensable means to achieving any real change in man and society. Vinobaji has been, it is interesting to note, laying a new emphasis in education, which he expresses in the words : "An education without a soul is no education." Further he has been emphasising with reference to the general cultural life that the problems created by the mind can only be solved by a power greater than the mind.

SRI AUROBINDO

The key-word with Sri Aurobindo is the Psychic Being. The child is to him "a self-evolving soul" and the psychic being is the evolving soul as distinguished from the soul conceived as an unchanging spiritual substance. It is the central spiritual principle of personality, which commands and integrates the varied energies of the body, the life and the mind in us. It is the essential wholeness, which can synthesise the diverse propensities of our nature. According to Sri Aurobindo the aim of education should be to seek to activate this inner principle. And says he, "It is not yet realised what this soul is or that the true secret, whether with child or man, is to help him to find his deeper self, the real psychic entity within. That, if we ever give it a chance to come forward, and still more if we call it into the foreground as 'the leader of the march set in our front', will itself take up most of the business of education out of our hands and develop the capacity of the psychological being towards a realisation of its potentialities of which our present mechanical view of life and man and external routine methods of dealing with them prevent us from having any experience or forming any conception." (*The Human Cycle*, 1949, p. 37)

With the collaboration of the Mother, a school was started in 1943, which

has later developed into the Sri Aurobindo International Centre of Education. This institution has sought to work out a scheme of education called the Integral Education. The Mother distinguishes five distinct spheres of education. They are the physical, the vital, the mental, the psychic and the spiritual. The physical education aims at giving a systematic discipline to the body, making it a conscious and a supple instrument ; the vital, to the varied impulses, bringing about a harmonisation among them ; the mental, a training to the mind, making it catholic and open to truth ; the psychic seeks to bring out the psychic being into direct activity, and the spiritual aims at giving to personality a wider universality. The Integral Education of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother aims at making an integral personality, with its dimensions of the Conscious, the Subconscious and the Superconscious, the aim of education and hopes thereby to bring about a radical transformation of life.

THE VALUE OF THESE TRENDS

All these trends of recent Indian thinking regard education as a continuing venture of life. However, in this unending continuity, the stage called secondary education which brings an individual up to relative maturity and the confidence to live one's life, is the most important. And the foregoing educational attempts have a special relevance to it.

Now, what is the value of all these attempts, these experiments and the insights they embody for Indian education ? The general pattern is vast and these constitute a small space in the entire picture. But do they not point the way Indian education should take, if it is to become satisfying to the Indian soul ? And if India achieves a proper synthesis of the intrinsic and the instrumental values, of the ultimate and the empirical, of the true, the good, the beautiful and the practical, will it not be some contribution to the world education and the world culture of today ?

INDRA SEN

THE FUTURE OF PSYCHOLOGY

INTRODUCTION : THE PSYCHOLOGICAL PURPOSE OF PSYCHOLOGY

WITH the most fundamental of all human questions "Who am I?" Nature enters the subjective stage of her evolutionary process. Man, her immediate instrument for the satisfaction of her urge to know herself, translates Nature's question in him into individual and collective terms. Ignorant of his almost complete subjection to Nature he thus reduces to a personal matter an issue of universal importance. This helps him to solve the problem and to satisfy Nature's demand.

In the course of subjective evolution out of this basic inquiry further questions arise and it becomes necessary to control their formulation, to systematize them and to classify whatever answers may be available. This is most effectively done in a system of scientific knowledge and thus Psychology comes into being. Starting from the desire of man to know himself it aims at a complete discovery of subjective reality and, if it is integral, at the inner development and perfection of man.

Thus there seem to arise simultaneously two goals for Psychology, one as expressed in a definite state of Knowledge which is the aim of ordinary Psychology, the other as expressed in a definite state of Being which is the aim of Integral Psychology. In reality however these two goals are interrelated. For while knowledge is inherent in being, true being results from an identification of consciousness which presupposes knowledge. Actually man is what he knows himself to be. We therefore may say that, in a way, both systems strive for the same goal though to ordinary Psychology it has not yet been revealed.

The way ordinary Psychology follows to achieve its aim of self-knowledge is that of objective inquiry into the subjective nature of man. Proceeding under the conception that all true knowledge can be arrived at only by objective means and ignorant of the fact that all objective reality is but a small cross-section of subjective existence it is self-bound by the very means with which it tries to liberate itself. However, sooner or later it will have to recognise the essential limitations of its instrument of scientific research.

Integral Psychology attains its goal of self-being by subjective inquiry into the nature of the scientist. Knowing that the appropriate means for the discovery of the subjective side of Nature must necessarily be subjective in order to arrive at an integral insight it is able to transcend the state of abstract knowledge achieved by ordinary Psychology and to arrive at a state of concrete

knowledge by identity. The scientist thus becomes what he knows. For he is aware of the fact that only by living a thing can it be perfectly known.

However, as the evolution of Nature has not yet reached its final stage we may without difficulty contemplate higher types of beings like seers, sages, saints, prophets, avatars or perhaps even a divine Man. And it should be our immediate concern not only to know more perfectly but to become more perfectly. Knowledge for action's sake is of a little value, knowledge for knowledge's sake of no value at all. What is fundamentally important is knowledge for being's sake. For it is being that determines action, not *vice versa*.

Science and most of all Psychology, therefore, may not be taken as the machinery welcome to the egoistic hands of the utilitarian who misuses its attainments for the satisfaction of his individual and collective desires and claims, nor as the pampered toy of the scientific playboy, that helps him to pass the time merrily, but as a precious instrument given to us as one of the means for perfecting our lives. Thus in regard to the development of this instrument neither the theoretical nor the practical attitude will do but the existential attitude alone.

It is the purpose of this paper to show the possibilities of adopting Psychology as an existential attitude. It will be seen that such an integration of the most important of all sciences of the present as well as of the future into our very lives not only supplies Psychology with the most powerful and efficient instrument of investigation and discovery, enabling it to fulfil the scientific purpose more satisfactorily than any other method and thus to justify its workings beyond any shade of doubt. It also, above all, helps man directly to know himself, to know his limitations, to overcome his limitations and to become himself. This is the supreme significance of Psychology as an existential science which it must recognise in order to reach the heights of its destination.

EXPOSITION : INDIVIDUATION, MENTAL, PSYCHIC AND SPIRITUAL

There are two aspects to the evolution of Psychology, one showing its development as a theoretical and theoretico-practical science, the other showing it as a psychological method or discipline of self-development and own-becoming. The first aspect is typified by the part Psychology has played in the West, the latter by the part it has played in the East, though there is as well an evolution of its theoretical aspect in the East as there is an evolution of its existential aspect in the West.¹ We are familiar with the development of Psychology in

¹ It is interesting to note that, with the exception of early Buddhist and Egyptian influences, the eastern and western evolutions took place rather independently of each other though secretly completing each other.

the West where it began nearly 100 years ago as a branch of Medical Science. We know Freud to be its proper initiator and Jung its most remarkable modern interpreter. In the main it is due to these two men and their discoveries that today Psychology has made its way not only into every branch of Science but into factories, business, educational institutes, clinics, Religion and even into the very home of many families. This fact, though often the target of cynical implications and the instrument for the application of modernism, is nevertheless remarkable if we consider the underlying process.

For here a Science in the course of not more than fifty years has reached a degree of popularity and general application that seems to make good in intensity what it lost in time. The reason for this fact can be given in one word : subjectivism. By subjectivism we mean the fundamental tendency in man to turn within, to direct the focal-point of the concentration of consciousness primarily no longer without, that is, at objects but at his own inner reality, his own nature, which thus no longer is objective to his consciousness but becomes subjective. It is the turning-within of man in quest for his true self. It is the beginning of a universal psychological movement, which finally will bring about the necessary transformation and perfection of man with all its revolutionary consequences. Of this, however, Western Psychology is not yet aware. What it is conscious of, and this is another most significant fact, is the pressing necessity of "individuation"; that means, of an integration of personality into one whole. The way this is to be achieved and the whole conceived is, for the time being, of secondary importance. We shall presently see that the aim of true integration and the way leading to it differ considerably from modern Western conceptions. What matters in the first instance is the idea of "individuation", the possibility of formulating this essential ideal which is far more than a mere word and will soon be seen to become one of the leading forces in the further evolution of mankind. The subjective age can have no better *leitmotif* or watchword than "individuation". And if this motto is given by Psychology, that science should become more and more able to show man the shortest, easiest and safest way to achieve this important goal. In fact there can be no task more urgently necessary, no claim upon modern Psychology of greater importance than the achievement of individuation in as many human beings as possible. For in whatever form the underlying force of the centralisation of human consciousness and personality manifests itself it is precisely this force that characterises the subjective age in which we live.

In order to satisfy the demand of this age imposed upon us as entities of the universal movement of Evolution leading beyond the state of present imperfections, it is essential for Psychology to become a personal affair, a matter of supreme significance to the individual. For it is the individual that makes any

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form of cosmic evolution possible. A general recognition is needed of the fact that the form of being, the mode of existence, the degree of development aimed at and achieved are more essential than the way of action and behaviour which always is its natural outcome and manifestation. Individuation, whatever form it may take, cannot be accomplished by institutions, can never be achieved by a few for the many. It has, as the very concept connotes, to be achieved by the individual. For this purpose the generalisation of Psychology is one of the fundamental conditions.

Modern man is a mental being, governed, more or less, by intellectual forces which determine his individual and collective approach towards reality. It is, therefore, Science that speaks most directly and unhindered by subconscious elements to him. In making Psychology, the science of the inner man, available to the individual of every faith, culture and state of mental or economic development and thus to give him the instruments to achieve for himself, and as a member of the race, a part of human unity, the aim revealed to him by the creative Power that is working out its intentions and plans in the course of an integral evolution on Earth, the West uses, consciously or unconsciously, the means available to it for the broadest and most encompassing manifestation and application of the force of individual psychological centralisation. At the same time it is important to observe the direction in which this trend of modern Western psychological tendencies develops. For, if for Psychology it proves to be possible to pursue its way of an individualisation of Science so that it becomes directly applicable to every type of individual, that is, if it succeeds in generalising its fundamental laws of the process of individuation and perfection without losing itself in superficialities, and thus in applying, spreading and transmitting those elements of the one existential attitude that alone can bring about the effect desired, it would cease to be merely a theoretical or applied system of knowledge and would become what we have termed an existential science. This then would be the crown of the psychological achievements of Psychology which by way of its immediate results manifested in the body of mankind would find its full justification.

Before we enter into the details of the psychological process of individuation and its possibility of creating the human integer, we must look for a moment at the psychological methods and disciplines of self-development and own-becoming which constitute the second aspect of the scientific development of Psychology. To trace it back to its actual origin seems impossible. However, we may be quite sure about an age of Mysteries at the beginning of the last cultural cycle of human evolution in which mystics established rites, symbols and secret lores, thus providing the primitive individual with the appropriate means for the realisation of a higher than the immediate physical truth and help-

ing him to grow inwardly towards the far-off goal of human perfection. These Mysteries were received differently by the different peoples to whom they were given. Thus we are able to observe a vitalisation and consequently a degeneration of the original revelations of spiritual truth in the uncivilised tribes. Not being able at least to intellectualise the Mysteries they remained barbaric and whatever was accepted into the life of the clan and of its constituting members survived only in the perverted forms of fetichism, animism, totem and taboo.

Parallel with this process of degeneration a mentalisation of the Mysteries took place. In the lost continent of Atlantis, in Egypt, Chaldea, Sumeria, Crete, Babylonia and Assyria the revelations became subject to the development of intellectualistic tendencies in the higher forms of human life. The result was a twofold representation of the hidden truths, one in the esoteric form of occult lore into which the selected only were initiated, the other in the exoteric form of mental religion that had to serve as a standard of moral and social conduct for the masses. And finally we find, parallel to these two forms of vitalised and mentalised Mysteries a spiritual development of their contents. The Orphic and Eleusinian Mysteries, the ancient teachings of Hermes of Egypt, known in Greece as Hermes Trismegistos, the father of Hermetic Science, the Magi in Persia, the Indian Rishis and their revelations constituted the pure and luminous bodies that were destined to receive the spiritual heritage of a past age and to preserve and pass on the laws of psychological growth, own-development and self-perfection and, for the benefit of man, to reformulate the eternal Truth in terms that applied directly to the fundamental elements governing the corresponding stage of human evolution.

Still, in the course of time much of these essential elements of inner progress was lost, the bodies that once had manifested them disintegrated and in most countries the one and only meaning of existence was thus forgotten. The cry of the hidden soul in man for guidance and protection was answered by the great founders of the different spiritual religions, like Buddha, Christ and Mohammed, who again spoke to man the eternal Word. In India only the ancient revelations of the Rishis survived and celebrated their re-awakening in the Upanishadic teachings which flooded the growing intellect with an intense light of supreme origin. And while in the West the powerful mystic tradition of the founders of Religion became subject to intellectual interpretation and dogmatic limitation, in the East the precious flower of spiritual culture stood in full bloom. Out of the ritualistic stage an age of intellectualised spirituality had arisen that gave birth to numerous schools of mystic self-discipline and spiritual self-development. In all these schools the mode of being was of the very first importance and it was upon this mode that ultimately everything depended. But even here degeneration was not prevented in the multiple forms spiritual

Truth had acquired though the source was never lost, the Word never quite forgotten. The eternal Flame continued to burn. Finally the Indian Renaissance stirred the fire again so that the glow in the East was visible all the world over. Ramakrishna and Vivekananda taught man anew all that he seemed to have forgotten. Buddhism reawakened, not only in India, and the Theosophical Society directed many a western eye eastward.

The last cultural cycle of human evolution, however, had not yet come to a close. A supreme element of integration was missing which was necessary to achieve the next step in this process. It still seemed to be impossible to integrate the different parts of human life and existence, individual and collective, the different forces at work, the different aims and ideals into a harmonious whole and thus to achieve the individual and racial perfection in the light and beauty of an all-embracing universal harmony for which mankind has striven since it awakened to a deeper Reality within and a higher Truth above. To manifest this supreme element in the consciousness of the Earth and thus to make the complete and absolute integration of being not only possible but inevitable was the colossal task that faced Sri Aurobindo. He achieved the impossible, thus giving every human being the unique opportunity to work out his complete integration into the Divine Whole and to perfect himself as one of his constituting parts by the grace of the Divine, for the benefit of the human race and as the fulfilment of his own meaning of existence, the justification of his life on Earth.

This supreme achievement is of fundamental importance for the psychological development of mankind and Psychology as the science dealing with this development cannot afford to ignore it. In the preceding paragraph we have seen how the spiritual forces throughout the ages led and directed the inner development of man, his psychological growth and unfolding. We have also seen how—though not as a theoretical or applied system of knowledge but as the one essential factor consciously recognised by the individual to be of the utmost importance as it alone could furnish the laws of right being and right living, of right thinking and right acting that are so vitally important to man—Psychology as an existential science, more lived than thought, from the very beginning of the present cultural cycle and most certainly long before its opening, had served man as the most fundamental principle of guidance and the interpretation of Truth. It had, long before modern western Psychology entered into the picture, supplied man with the keys not only for his individuation but for his spiritualisation and divine integration. Man, however, with very few exceptions, proved unable to use them. To-day ordinary mental and spiritual Psychology furnished at last by Sri Aurobindo with the master-key will no longer attempt in vain the transformation of man but in the light of his teaching of an encom-

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passing Integral Psychology will be able to show him the goal and the way. The future of Psychology thus depends on its recognition and acceptance of the spiritual master-key.

Starting from the present state of development of western Psychology we shall trace out the new perspectives this key opens up for the science of the inner man and see how it becomes possible to integrate Eastern, that is, spiritual, and Western, that is, mental, Psychology into one system of integral psychological knowledge.

(To be continued)

JOBST MÜHLING

SRI RAMAKRISHNA

SRI RAMAKRISHNA represents spirituality at its absolute, its pristine fount and power. In him we find the pure gold of spirituality at a time when duplicity, perplexity, deceit and falsehood on the one hand and atheism, disbelief and irreverence on the other reigned supreme.

When spirituality had almost disappeared from the world and even in India it existed, as it were, merely in name, there was the advent of Sri Ramakrishna bringing with him spirituality in its sheer plenitude and investing it with eternal certitude and infallibility.

He proclaimed the quintessence of the Spirit, casting aside all husk and rejecting all that was irrelevant. Sri Ramakrishna is the very embodiment of this true and unadulterated spirituality, its very essence.

The first word of spirituality is a clear realisation, an unveiled intuition of truth, God attained. It is not a concept or a doctrine or an intellectual conclusion, but a living experience, a concrete realisation. Philosophers and scholars are at pains to prove the existence of God and the Self with the help of reason, argumentation and syllogism. But it is ridiculous to try that way. You stand before me face to face. Yet should I try to prove your presence? Or to prove my own? Truth is self-existent. It is real since it exists. The existence of God, the Self, is the truth of all truths and is axiomatic. It is a matter of experience, insight and intuition.

The spiritual world is as real as this physical world—even more real, Ramakrishna says. It is a different sphere of consciousness. One has to come up to this level to know of it and one has to settle here for good, leaving behind one's earthly dwelling. Not merely the field of action in life and not just one part of the being but the whole life and being have to be consecrated to the attainment of that only Goal. To know the Truth, the Self or God, one has first to realise them. One has to merge in them. One has to become these alone—as the Upanishad says, "Verily the knower of the Brahman becomes the Brahman Itself." The essential truth of spirituality consists not even in doing something but in this 'becoming'. Man manifests his inner soul through his actions. His external conduct reflects his inner becoming. In the words of Sri Ramakrishna a man breathes out what he eats.

Perhaps we have a mission in the world, but before that we have to realise God. He alone has the right to act, and his deeds alone achieve fulfilment, who

has been chosen and authorised by God. The spiritual practice of Sri Ramakrishna laid great stress on the *trance*. It signifies that the outer mind should be withdrawn from all sense-attraction, not going out in all directions but focussed on the pure spiritual truth, like an arrow shot into its target.

What absurd ideas do we not cherish in the name of spirituality ? Firstly, according to the common notion a spiritual figure, a Yogi, a sadhu is he who is endowed with some miraculous powers. As for instance, walking over water, flying in the sky, living without food or eating an enormous quantity, healing diseases at a puff of breath, telling the ins and outs of a man at sight or at the mere mention of his name. Any accomplishment of this kind commands our humble devotion. The eight-fold occult powers are considered the very acme of spirituality. In Europe too the measure and the proof of a saint lie in miracles. Sri Ramakrishna's advent declared the simple truth that miracles have nothing to do with spirituality—rather many a time miracle-performance becomes an obstacle to spirituality, and it is a proof of the want of true spirituality. Such powers lead the aspirants astray from the straight path into blind lanes. The measure of spirituality is not the display of power but the attainment of discrimination, dispassion, devotion and love of God and such other simple and common and eternal qualities.

On the other hand, spirituality does not consist in any doctrine whatsoever. Spirituality is not based on a credo or a mental deduction or a dogma. Real spirituality is not a rational conclusion, but a realisation in the heart and a direct intuition. A spiritual man may not express his realisations through a new doctrine or relate it to some already existing doctrines, but that will not in any way diminish his spirituality. Again many people hold that the observance of ceremonials and rites comprises spirituality; this too is far from the truth. The truth does not lie in any of these things. A spiritual aspirant may take their help if necessary, but the spiritual realisation is far above them and quite a different thing.

One thing is ever associated with the name of Sri Ramakrishna—it is the synthesis of all religions. He has synthesised all religions within him. By synthesis we usually mean finding out the essential principles of different religions and harmonising them. But Sri Ramakrishna's work was not of this type. Every religion leads to the same goal. However different and contradictory may appear the outer form of spiritual disciplines, fundamentally each derives from the same source and culminates in the same Truth. Sri Ramakrishna has proved this unity and has brought about, so to say, a unification, not merely a union, of all religions.

Religions are at variance, not on the conception of God or spirituality, but when something else is adored in their name or in their stead. When we

take some physical miracle or vital power or mental dogma as the object of our devotion, then we deviate from the true spiritual path and become worshippers of inferior gods or spirits of the lower order. The spiritual world, or God as He verily is, is beyond the domains of the body, life and mind. Further, transcending these there is a fourth realm and its truth and dharma are nothing but God-realisation and true spirituality.

Another very important characteristic distinguishing Ramakrishna is that he has taken spirituality in a simple, straight, common-sense view and has attained it in a very matter-of-fact way. He is generally depicted to a great extent as one who was rapt in a state of inwardness and devoid of external and worldly knowledge. Whatever his behaviour in the conduct of daily life, he was marvelously pragmatic in his inner consciousness and in the practice of his spiritual sadhana. Dogmatism, nebulous fantasy and sophistry eclipse the truth, the thing in itself, and in the place of truth a semblance of truth or something quite non-essential is interpolated. The amount of common sense that is needed for success in ordinary life is also equally required for victory in the domain of consciousness. Sri Ramakrishna was endowed with an inborn, alert, practical sense. So nothing could delude him in the name of spirituality and nothing could entrap him in any way. Moreover, by virtue of this quality he has brought about an immense reconciliation between the physical and the spiritual worlds. In a good many cases men, devoted too much to spirituality, are found to be inept in keeping up with the physical world or to respond to it adequately. Sri Ramakrishna is not to be classed among them. The ideal of Sri Ramakrishna would not admit stupidity as a qualification for saintliness.

Sri Ramakrishna's advent took place in a scientific age, in the world of modern civilisation, amid a deluge of atheism, when the physical consciousness was the dominating principle everywhere. He appeared before such a world in all his rusticity, for he was to demonstrate by the very example of his own life that the highest aim of human life is to find God, to find him dwelling in the heart. "Know Him alone and give up all thought and speech and act that are of no value." However great may be the external education and culture, there is something still higher before which all these dwindle into insignificance and even their complete absence does not matter at all if one gets at the one heart of all things.

So we see that an ultra-modern youth born and brought up in the atmosphere of modernism had to offer all the accomplishments of modern life at the feet of an artless, rustic soul with the prayer, "I am thy disciple, deign to teach me." Further, inspired by his Master's unique power he, Vivekananda, threw himself, like a thunderbolt, upon the country where modern civilisation

had reached its acme. In Vivekananda modernism received the initiation of the supreme spirituality to become its instrument and servitor.

Sri Ramakrishna, at the very outset, proved in his own life the conquest of the inner over the outer, of Consciousness over Matter, of the spiritual over the mundane. And then he sought to impress that high truth on the life-plane of humanity. He sowed the seed of a new future creation. That is why he is the confluence of two epochs. The past ceases and the new future is ushered in hum. He seems to have assimilated the essence of all the different spiritual practices of the past and discarded as husk and skin all the non-essentials which vary according to the variations of time and place and person. He brought forward and revived for the future the real truth, the quintessence of spirituality, which means also the supreme felicity. The fundamental nature of the spiritual perfection of Sri Ramakrishna consists in the realisation of God in His Absoluteness. He exemplified, in philosophical terms, the unity and synthesis of the Self and Nature, existence and power, the immutable and its dynamis. He used to say that the Eternal and its manifestation always go together. The Transcendent is inherent in the manifest, again the manifest is inherent in the Transcendent. Ascend the Eternal through the stages of the manifestation and come down from the Eternal into its manifestation—its creation which should not be looked upon as an illusion but only as a form of the Eternal. Therefore Sri Ramakrishna was the worshipper of the Divine Power, the child of the Mother. The Mother herself is the Power of the Brahman.

The dynamic Vedanta of Vivekananda, its application in life, is based on this foundation. Spirituality and life are not two separate things—spirituality should be established and made to flower and bloom in life itself. This great truth always inspired Vivekananda in all his activities. Before the advent of Sri Ramakrishna the word “religion” or “spirituality” used to convey an other-worldly pursuit to the aspirant and to the public as well. Wherever there was some real spiritual practice, the aim and the impulse naturally tended to illustrate the dictum that Brahman alone is the truth and the world an illusion. Sri Ramakrishna shook to its roots the then prevailing conception of illusionism when he made the great Vedantin Totapuri give up the negative path, “Brahman is not this, not this”, and accept all this too as Brahman. He further showed Totapuri the glory of the Mother of the universe. Vivekananda seized upon this fundamental realisation of Sri Ramakrishna to turn the tide of religion. His endeavour was to bring down religion or spirituality on the surface of the earth, into normal society and into the ordinary ways of life-activities. Sri Ramakrishna was a genuine Sannyasin at heart but he had never appeared in the garb of a Sannyasin. Vivekananda in spite of his hoisting up the banner of

SRI RAMAKRISHNA

a Sannyasin was a mighty worker in his heart and conduct. He was a worker, but inwardly in communion with the Spirit. No doubt, he laid great stress on Samadhi, trance, for the achievement of the unalloyed, pure spiritual truth, but he never accepted the Nirvikalpa Samadhi as the sole self-sufficing goal for all or even for the many. He did not want, even personally, often if not always, in the Vedantic imagery, to melt away as a salt-doll in the ocean. Like Ramprasad he would rather not become a lump of sugar but taste it instead. The aim of his dynamic personality was to purify and transform the egoistic 'I' into the real 'I' and take part in the play of the Divine Mother in her creation.

The future spiritual realisation will follow this line of development ; all efforts will seek to make this great realisation still more manifest, widely established and universally practised. Sri Ramakrishna opened this immortalising fount of true spirituality and Vivekananda spread it abroad to create a living spiritual atmosphere. The spiritual leader of the future will fix for ever its concrete and permanent form.

NOLINI KANTA GUPTA

(Translated by Chinmoy from the original Bengali)

SRI AUROBINDO ASHRAM— A SYMBOL OF INDIA'S CULTURAL HERITAGE

(Continued from the March issue)

THE PROCESS OF DARSHAN

As days rolled on, the influence of Sri Aurobindo's life-long sadhana began to spread far and wide. In the hermitage of perfection the number of pilgrims began slowly to grow. Not only from the four corners of India but from abroad visitors began to pour in. The Darshan day is a great day for the Ashramites. As on the advent of spring the Malaya wind begins to blow and everywhere new life is visible, so on the Darshan day the Ashram atmosphere gets surcharged with a bliss far above the reach of the earth. Here my attempt is to give a glimpse of these days when we had the opportunity to stand before the Master and receive his Blessings. Even among the newcomers there was hardly anyone who did not feel the ineffable force of Sri Aurobindo's Presence. (I mention his presence in particular because, though the Mother's was just as important, we had her amongst us all the time, and it was something special to meet the Master face to face.)

In the early years, a day before the Darshan, a list of the names of those participating in the Darshan used to be put up on a board. To each, one and a half minutes were allotted. In the list the names of those residing for good in the Ashram would come first. Half an hour before the time given, people would reach the meditation hall and wait for their turn. A copy of the list would be with the Master. From time to time he would look up the names of those coming in. Sometimes strange things happened at Darshan, overwhelming the disciple or devotee. Once an American doctor remained lying at the feet of Sri Aurobindo for about half an hour as he had forgotten all about himself. When he came out he said that he had seen the whole map of America at his Feet.

In the February Darshan of 1938, X came and sat down in the meditation hall as soon as the Darshan started. While concentrating in the heart he saw a full-blown rose there. A little after he saw it coming outside and taking its position right in front of the heart and remaining so for several hours. At that time he did not know the significance of the rose. He aspired for new-birth and went for Darshan with garlands of new-birth.

On his return, he saw blazing sunlight above his head. He reported both the experiences to Sri Aurobindo, who wrote back :

“They are symbolic—one of the flowering of surrender in the heart (psychic opening), the other of the spiritual opening to the Truth Light above mind. These are the two capital movements of the yoga.” (24-2-1938)

A little to the south-east of Sri Aurobindo's room there is a small apartment. It was here that the Darshan took place. All through the night some sadhaks and sadhikas would be busy decorating the throne with flowers. Only one person at a time would be with the Master for Darshan. For that moment the Divine would be with him alone. To avoid disturbing him, others would be stopped at the door of the adjacent hall. When he would finish his darshan and come out, the next one would get in. Between the exit of the one and the entry of the other, the Master kept waiting. So great was the care taken for the feeling of every individual. To each the Master gave a penetrating and gracious look and then blessed him, putting his palm on his head. All were allowed to touch his feet. Either before or after finishing this obeisance, the person would offer pranam to the Mother in the same way. Before parting some of us would put our heads in the centre of the throne and both the Master and the Mother blessed again together. In those days the Master's grace was raining over us like Amitabha Buddha's. As through glass windows the things in a room are visible, so the Master's yogic eye would penetrate our being and read our past and present. Newcomers would return with a new energy to fight the battle of life.

Not for months but for years people would aspire for the day, counting weeks and months. An employee of Messrs Juglal Kamlapat had been trying for Darshan for years together but before he could start something or other would happen all of a sudden to make him postpone his journey. For twenty long years he kept on aspiring but could not get the result, yet the spark of aspiration instead of dying out remained alive all through those years, and at last one day he found himself under the Mother's touch. There were others who would turn up for the Darshan at all costs, overcoming mountains of difficulties. Aspirants working in courts or colleges in distant places like Delhi or Patna would reach in the morning and leave in the evening after Darshan, all because of lack of time, but could not afford to miss even a single occasion. What part this momentary Darshan used to play in every case is written on the pages of their life-history.

Once someone asked a visitor out of curiosity, “What is that which makes you run for a momentary Darshan from 1500 miles away ?” In all the earnestness of his heart he replied, “God knows what Power is in him that he conquers the heart of a man in the twinkling of an eye. When the Darshan day

approaches such a burning desire flares up within that one cannot restrain oneself.”

In an article a Professor from Cawnpore, who had written a thesis on a particular aspect of Sri Aurobindo, wrote : “One look of Sri Aurobindo at a man’s heart, and it is conquered. There is a lustre in his eyes that infuses itself into the soul of man and sets it aflame. The flame goes on growing in intensity. He puts into the heart of man the flower-seed of Divine love that is sure to grow till it cannot afford to miss even a single occasion of the Darshan.”

The Darshan would start at 6.30 in the morning and go on till 2 p.m. Many used to come in their cars or in hired buses from Madras and the suburbs. A number of aspirants from Pondicherry also would be allowed to take part. After 1942 the privilege of the August Darshan was extended to the Ashram employees. Those who came for Darshan before 1938 had the luck to have the personal touch of the Master. Afterwards rarely anyone could have the opportunity to touch his feet.

“The outward touch is helpful, but the inward is still more helpful when one is accustomed to receive it with a certain concreteness—and the outward touch is not always fully possible, while the inward can be there all the time.”

Someone once asked, “Two days back in a dream I saw Sri Aurobindo coming towards me. His body and dress were of a blue colour. Why did I see him in this colour and not any other ?” The answer was: “It is the basic light Sri Aurobindo manifests.”

From 1926 to 1938—13 years—this procedure of the Darshan continued uninterrupted. Afterwards several changes took place. Putting up the list of names and indicating the time were stopped for good. But the number of people coming for Darshan increased so much that it became imperative to do something to maintain discipline. As a check on unauthorised intrusion, cards were issued over the signature of the Secretary. To look after the needs and convenience of visitors a separate department was organised which came to be known as the Bureau Central ; to hire houses, to furnish them, to keep them clean during the visitors’ stay was the work allotted to this department. Previously Darshan cards used to be issued from the Secretary’s office ; afterwards this work was also transferred to the Bureau Central.

Before 1939 there were only three Darshan days during the year. The fourth Darshan was introduced from 1939. April 24 is the date of the Mother’s final arrival day at Pondicherry. Her first visit to Pondicherry was on March 29, 1914. On her return in 1920, she never left the place even for a day.

There was a reason why the fourth Darshan was introduced. When in 1938 the Master had an accident to his right leg the November Darshan was postponed. Next February also there was no Darshan. August was far off,

Many began to feel the absence of the Master's Darshan for such a long time. In response to their aspiration the Master's grace came to us in the form of the April Darshan.

Even the four Darshans seemed to us too few. A prayer was sent to the Master—"It would be very good if you could come out to give darshan once a month instead of only once in three months. Is it possible?" Sri Aurobindo answered: "If I went out once a month, the effect of my going out would be diminished by one third."

One event of note in the 1950 April Darshan was that all the members of J.S.A.S.A were given the privilege of a march past in their group uniforms before the Master and the Mother and then could go up again for the usual way of darshan. In April 1951 there was a rearrangement. For Balcony Darshan, the members in their group uniforms stood in formation facing the Mother. A few minutes before Darshan they assembled again in the street behind the Ashram and filed in, group after group, in proper order, marched past the Samadhi and took their respective places. The standard bearers lowered their banners in salute. The Darshan started with the groups going up in a line.

From 1939 there was a change in the timing of the Darshan too. Instead of the morning it got fixed almost at 2 p.m. On the evening before the Darshan day the Mother would see all the aspirants for Darshan and bless each with a rose. To get an opportunity to touch the feet of the Master became a thing of the past. The number gradually rose to such a figure that we had to form a queue and have Darshan while filing past. The queue became so long that from the Darshan room it would reach up to the main gate. From the gate it would pass through the reading room to the courtyard, then turn to the meditation hall towards the staircase leading up to the Darshan room.

Many had to remain outside waiting on the footpaths in the hot sun. So tarpaulins were suspended over the footpaths where people could wait for their turn. That they might not have to stay long in the queue, a few were allowed in and the rest were asked to wait outside. Those allowed to go in formed three groups: two groups would remain seated, and one group would line up from the centre of the courtyard facing the meditation hall to the Darshan room. On their leaving the place the next group would occupy it. And a new group would be allowed in from outside to occupy the place of the former group. This minimised their exposure to the sun. Lest one should have to waste one's time in search of shoes and umbrellas, these articles were taken charge of by some sadhaks who issued a ticket for each of them. Putting the shoes in a galvanised tin tray the young sadhaks and sadhikas carried them to the back door. When, after finishing Darshan, people returned they were

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directed by several sadhaks, posted at different places, to the back door where they could make their exit with their shoes, etc.

When a newcomer entered the meditation hall, he felt a peace reigning there and some mystic power that was silently active so overwhelmed him that his ever-active market-place mind became still for a time and he got attuned to something higher unthought of and unknown.

He got the first glimpse of the Master on reaching the top of the staircase and his eyes got fixed. Now nobody was detained here as before. Crossing the hall, the line of the sadhaks reached the Darshan room. Each stood there for a moment, bowed, placed his garland on the tray on one side and on the other his personal offering and then looked up to have Darshan. His petty personality drowned in the grandeur before his eyes, he moved on overpowered by the force of Truth and Grace and came down through the adjoining hall. Then he would awake to the experience gained at that moment when the charm of the first touch of Truth would fade away and normal life-currents begin again to flow through his veins.

He would remember what he had seen. Could words give appropriate expression to that ? The Darshan that gave such a shake to the soul ! If one were allowed to stay there for a few moments more ! Thus brooding, he would move on slowly. The splendour of Brahmatej that was visible on Sri Aurobindo's person was well described by the poet Rabindranath in 1928. After visiting Sri Aurobindo Rabindranath wrote : "At the very first sight I could realise that he had been seeking for the soul and gained it, and through his long process of realisation had accumulated within him a silent power of inspiration. His face was radiant with an inner light and his serene presence made it evident to me that his soul was not crippled and cramped to the measure of some tyrannical doctrine which takes delight in inflicting wounds upon life... I felt that the utterance of the ancient Hindu Rishi spoke from him of that equanimity which gives the human soul its freedom of entrance into the All. I said to him, 'You have the Word and we are waiting to accept it from you. India will speak through your voice, Hearken unto me.'"

Jean Herbert of the University of Geneva, 'not a mystical dreamer but a ruddy physical giant and a man of extensive experience in the League of Nations and the United Nations', states :

"Now thousands who had Sri Aurobindo's Darshan could not help believing that they were face to face with a great saint and sage, even if they could make no precise guess as to the route he had followed and the level he had reached. His look very clearly had in it something superhuman, ...as far above the human look as the latter is above the look of a dog or a cat. And those—including some Western intellectuals—whom he touched with his hand, or

to whom he wrote letters, definitely felt that a high power was acting on them and continued to act on the deeper strata of their being long after the actual contact had ceased.”

Swami Ramtirth of Hyderabad had been acquainted with the name of Sri Aurobindo from his College life. In 1939 he tried once to come but permission was not given. Ten years after when he had the opportunity to have a Darshan of the Master, he gave a vivid pen-picture of what he had felt and experienced :

“I had always a great attraction for Sri Aurobindo. His *Essays on the Gita* captivated my mind the most and I wondered what that soul must be who could rear such lofty thought. I have learnt from experience that a moment's contact with one advanced in spirituality and a developed soul is far more valuable than reading heaps of books. But now to speak of Sri Aurobindo for I had yearned for long to see him. Whenever I would happen to meet someone of his Ashram I would lose myself in hearing him speak about the Master. The more I heard the more my eyes longed to see him. The 24th November, 1949, is an unforgettable day in my life.

“I was sitting in my place along with others for my turn. There were others, thousands in number, who had gathered for the same purpose. Absolute silence was reigning everywhere. It was evident that some unforeseen power was acting upon us and our whole being was drawn towards it. On the other side were those who were returning after their Darshan. Casting our eyes upon theirs and looking at their countenances we tried to read what they had received. When my turn came I too started to climb up the staircase and the next moment was before the Master. I had taken with me a lotus in my hand as a token of my offering. Placing it before him I stood for his Darshan. Turning his eyes upon mine he seemed to pass into me. I felt as if a powerful, illuminating cluster of stars were spinning before me. Only half a minute I could manage to stand before him and I felt here was a soul which had worked silently and created a great reserve of power which could lead humanity to a higher life.”

J. Vijayatunga, a well-known Ceylonese journalist, after having one February Darshan, wrote on March 21, 1948 :

“...I have found here more ‘Santi’ than I did at Santiniketan, and a more perfect organisation than at any other community centre in India.

“The personality behind the organisation, to the minutest detail, is the Mother....A woman of great dignity and beauty in her youth, as well as of great intellect, she embodies in her frail frame to-day an amazing vitality, through her eyes pours a radiance that is not earthly. The ‘darshan’ of her and the receiving of her blessing in the form of a flower is no mere idolatry.

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“At the Sri Aurobindo ‘darshan’ she was seated on his right. Sri Aurobindo himself, [golden-hued in complexion, looked healthier than in his photograph which was taken about 30 years ago. There were a few wrinkles on his brow but his face was unlined and serene. He sat completely still without moving a muscle, without the slightest stir. The ‘darshan’ itself, to enable the 650 members of the Ashram and the 1500 or so visitors to file past him, each making his or her offering of garlands, of sprigs of flowers, took nearly three hours. The upper part of his body was bare, a dhoty covering him from the waist downwards...

“Sri Aurobindo is in the direct line of India’s great rishis, who were teachers and guides and so long as a Sri Aurobindo lives in our midst so long will there be ‘Dharma’ and righteousness in this land.”

(To be continued)

NARAYANPRASAD

HOW THE MOTHER'S GRACE CAME TO US*

REMINISCENCES OF VARIOUS PEOPLE IN CONTACT WITH THE MOTHER

(Continued from the last issue)

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THE Christmas vacation had just begun and I wanted to spend it in Pondicherry. Those were the days of the Punjab partition and millions of people who were homeless had to be rehabilitated in different parts of India and the trains were over-crowded. When I came to board the Grand Trunk Express my heart gave way to see the platform a seething mass of desperate human beings scrambling to get into the train somehow. Every compartment was packed to overflowing and some of the South Indian soldiers bound for their homes stood at the doors to shove off any new entrant. I was very much nonplussed as to what I should do : whether lose my chance of replenishing my spiritual stock or make a final bid and trust in the Mother's grace. I asked my servant to bundle me into a compartment through a window and not care at all for what happened to me. The soldiers blocked the window but I went on butting in not caring for their shoutings and angry ejaculations. One of them showed me his bayonet to which I retorted, "I will be glad if the Indian soldiers kill me." A hush fell on them and one of them said, "Let him get in, he will know himself that there is nowhere any accommodation."

On entering the compartment I discovered that I could barely get space to stand, and to add to my distress almost all were bound for Madras. So the dismal prospect of having to stand for hours on end sent a cold shiver through my spine. Will the Grace prove again, 'Trust and thy trust will be justified' ? This was the question in my mind. The train was late in starting, and I began to feel stiff in the legs and yet there was no sign of anybody relenting and offering me a seat. At last the train steamed off and another Punjabi refugee coming to know that I hailed from Lahore offered me a seat. I heaved a sigh of relief, and marvelled at the omnipotence of the Grace. I do not remember how it happened but to the utter chagrin of the petulant soldiers I got sleeping space by the time dusk was falling. Thus I arrived in Pondicherry without any strain and spent a fortnight in the ambience of the Mother.

* Readers are invited to send their experiences to the Editor or the Compiler or directly to the Mother.

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The return journey proved even more thrilling and fortifying. I kept with me money barely enough for the journey and the rest I offered to the Mother. But some sadhaks gave me some books to be delivered to their friends in Delhi. I did not care to see that my luggage exceeded by many pounds the maximum that a third class passenger is allowed to carry with him. And the railway regulation is that if the luggage is only ten pounds in excess then the passenger has to pay only that much freight charge but if it is even one pound more than that then as a penalty he has to pay for the whole luggage that he is carrying with him. Somewhere in the middle of the journey the T.T.E. quietly entered the compartment and started checking not only the tickets but the luggage too. He tried to lift my trunk and felt that it weighed more than what was allowed. My heart fluttered, but I persisted that it was not so. He told me that he would bring the weighing machine at the next halt and then charge for the excess. I remembered what the Mother had said, that on such occasions we should not be agitated but call the Grace to come to our succour. I had with me only five rupees. I sat quietly and went on calling the Mother.

The T.T.E. got down at the next station and I had a faint hope that he might forget all about it and not pester me any more. But just before the train steamed off he again got in with a servant carrying the weighing machine. He started weighing the luggage of another passenger and charged something in the vicinity of thirty rupees. And now was my turn and I had only five rupees on me ! The servant asked me to draw out the trunk from beneath the seat. I asked him to do it himself. He lifted it and at the last moment left it saying it was not in excess and then walked back to his seat. I was greatly relieved and could see how by an idea put into the mind of a man the yogic Force invoked can subtly change from far away the whole course of events.

People often feel bewildered when they are told that Sri Aurobindo used to help the Allies in the last world war or India's struggle for freedom. And yet if we read the account of the last war we see that Hitler had made foolproof preparations for an invasion of Britain and his relations with the Soviet Russia were most friendly and yet a small idea like a tiny bee started buzzing in his head, 'If Russia stabs me from behind, then what ?' And this small buzz paralysed all his sprawling war-machinery. I do not suggest that this was the actual way in which Sri Aurobindo worked—the Yogic Force has also a massive concrete outward-going movement affecting physical events : I am only suggesting how tremendously potent a small suggestion sometimes can be and how a Yogi can manipulate it.

R. K.

Compiled by HAR KRISHAN SINGH

AFTER SEEING THE MOTHER

THE sun, massed densely, bliss in light,
Shines deeply, nudely in my eyes,
Obscuring colour, blinding form.

A silhouette seen on Eternity's sands,
Still and pure, crimson-rimmed ;
The sounds of prayers humble and sweet
Echoed on films of perfumed air,
Prayers and hymns to you...

For all the names of love you are,
All the beauty of Heaven's dreaming,
The joy and strength of its silent soul.

TONY SCOTT

THE SAROD PLAYER

THE plucked chords, the plectrum passing over the strings,
The face of the player, eyes closed, bowed, swaying,
Driven by the pressure of rhythm, slowly intensifying
Through the relaxed body to the hands,
Joined now by drum taps,—all this brings
Silence, an exclusion, an awareness of fingers,
Of fingers transforming impulse into sound,
Sound converging again on silence,
From where it came.
Out of concentration wideness is born.

DICK BATSTONE

IN ALL SUCH THINGS

In all such things—
In rising mist, before the morning sun
Her task begins,
And all is bathed in soft and silver light.

In all such things
As when a peace-enchanted lake reflects
An amber sky
And a smiling heaven clasps a smiling earth—

Or when is heard
The blended voices of a youthful band
Of singing children
And music wings with wholesome innocence—

Or when the night
A splendorous star-gemmed robe enfolds about
This tiny globe
And finite-wearied eyes drink in the Infinite—

In all such things
That wake the slumbering soul to joy again,
I see Your face
And I am cleansed, at once made whole again....

GODFREY

NEW ROADS

BOOK X

THE BOOK OF NEW BEGINNINGS

SAID The Day of The Lord :
To be—to know—to love
is to exist in Me,
conscious to grow,
into my Bliss above.

Man comes into birth
without a care,
born of his own desire
on Death's own mystic altar
of earth—air—fire—and water ;
Thus, said The Word.

But now,
he will no longer stand
upon high places false
to denounce the distant stars
and all eternity—

O thou,
a living grain of sand
maybe—as planets waltz
around the Sun that bars
not man, nor his humanity.

Heaven has answered Her Call
from the depths of the Night,
Upsurging the Light will fall
from a greater height.

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In the earth below
an echo was heard—
the cry of the Swan-flight
rippled the pools of 'sleep'—

deep—night—stirred
the birth of the Sun-glow.

Where fall the flickering images
of the prayers
of people without priests—
sages—seers—or theists.

Sound, sense, security :
man is no longer bound
to inheritance
but his impurity—

Descending through doors of
middle—world—melodies,
opening the corridors of
earth-old memories.

Mind made no magic
more mad
and more marvellous
than its own martyrdom
born of this world :

relic—glad—glorious
free and unfurled.

Flame of Fraternity—
possible now
the Fire of Community,
kiss on thy brow—

Wipe not away
the tears of Compassion
because they say
it is not the fashion ;

NEW ROADS

And here

New Worlds will flow
into our common sight,
New Calm, New Silence know
Truth's mystic Rite—

The Seer

will help man grow
to a greater height,
his Wisdom will bestow
a New Delight.

In The Night of Beginnings
was The Word ;

In these New Beginnings
came The Day of The Lord.

NORMAN DOWSETT

THUS SANG MY SOUL

(25)

VII. MOTHERING THE BOND OF LOVE : PRAYERS AND PRAISES

(continued)

50. SURRENDER

O, WHEN for once and all I have decided
 To give my soul and heart and body-crust,
 My self and all to Thee, so that I must
Forever untraceably be guided
By Thee : when this heart's happy will has sided
 With thy transcendent Will in fullest trust
 So Thou may sate Thy most Light-powered lust
On my surrender, total, undivided,
Then must I waver, dread or hesitate
 To follow Thee, Mother, at every cost ?
 If it be Thy command, O let me labour
 Or laze or laugh or suffer, be a sabre
To all that dares Thy Fiat, small or great,
 Or die myself in happy holocaust.

51. SACRIFICE

Mother, if such Thy Will, my fate so writ,
 Without one word in heart myself I render
To nought, unwhispered to men's ear or wit
 Of world, if I must make my mute surrender,
O if the bitter and devouring truth
 Which haunts me, must forever haunt anew,
So that I be consumed sans pity or ruth
 By its fire, till rest no ash or residue ;
Or if in Thy firm grip unloosable
 Without all cavil I must mangled be ;
Without a chance to the mulish mind to wail
 If sheer and burning truth must shine in me ;
And if Thou willest that without delight
 Of Thy sweet smile that makes the whole world move,
Makes one forget all world, I die in slight—
 This very stroke is the nearness of Thy Love !

(To be continued)

HAR KRISHAN SINGH

A DIVE INTO DR. RUNES' *A BOOK OF CONTEMPLATION*

(Continued from the March issue)

WE shall see now Dr. Runes throwing out a drastic statement in which he dissects worship into two rigid racial kinds, as if they were born enemies, instead of regarding them as stages or steps in the evolving consciousness of the individual. He proclaims :

“Worship is either Judaic or Pagan, philosophical or idolatrous. The Hebrews worship no man, no saint, no priest, no face—only the Echod, the One, Ain Soph, the Infinite, Elohim, the Eternal.”

This only shows how limited the scope of Hebrew religion and its God is. The Hebrew evidently takes pride in imprisoning God safely in some ivory tower of the remote heavens and refuses to worship him in man and Nature, in all that is around him. But if God is the One and Infinite how can there exist anything except God ? All is He. Now logically and even commonsensically it clearly follows that if all is He then it is a sheer contradiction and a mass of unreason not to see and worship Him everywhere, in all and as all clay, man, bird and beast.

Why worship a face, a man, a saint ? Good Lord ! The Jewish Scholar perhaps has never tasted how thrilling and wonderful an experience it is to plunge into the unfathomable deeps, gazing at the all-captivating beauty of the light-emitting starry limpid eyes, the peace-massed sweet and soothing godly countenance of the human spiritual Guru, how the magnetic pull of his constantly refreshing presence and the dynamic power of his ever-enlightening influence act upon the being of the disciple, his worshipper, in transforming the latter's whole life into spiritual gold, as it were. The very utterance of the divine name of the Master makes the disciple's hair stand on end, brings an unusual calm into his senses, purity into his heart, light into his mind and soul. This and, indeed, much more.

Plainly Dr. Runes does not understand the significance of the saintly human Guru and why one is asked by the Scriptures to seek for a Guru and adhere to him life-long. For without having one who had experienced and realised the Divine as the guide the novice would have to suffer grave dangers, even risk life itself. Hence the indispensability of the human Guru, except for those too rare souls who are known as Path-Finders. The Guru is in fact

the representative of the Supreme Divine. He has become one with Him, and therefore he has the adhikara, the divine Seal, as it were, of acting in tune with the Divine Will in not only guiding the disciple but in all matters. The Guru is human in the sense that he is in the human form. In spirit he is absolutely and eternally one with the Divine. Therefore he can act and does act like the Divine or rather in the very way the Divine would act. And the real Guru attributes to himself nothing more than being an instrument, a free and spontaneous channel of the Supreme, a simple reed in and through which the eternal Sri Krishna manifests Himself and sings His unending Celestial Song of Life Divine !

It has become perhaps too difficult a business for Dr. Runes to follow rightly, far less evaluate, the truth for which certain forms and ways of other religious systems stand. As if living in the dark ages, and with a note of intolerance, he declares:

“The pagan, whatever his denomination, wants a man-god, a visible, a walking, talking and personal god or goddess. He believes not in the invisible, he yearns for ikon and flesh and blood. But stone and flesh and blood and gold cannot fix the heart of man to the Or Adoni, the light of the Lord, in which we see Him with our love and conscience, in deeds of justice and charity, which deeds are the Alpha and Omega of true faith.”

The true faith in fact is that which lands us safely in the Divine, not being particular about this or that means and taking the help of all that comes in life as a golden means towards That. And if our love, justice and charity remain full with the stuff of what is merely human and humanitarian and will not bring us God-realisation, then, it must be said, they too have equally failed though they have a value of their own. Dr. Runes seems to think that there is one and only one way of approaching the Eternal. If God is Infinite, which Dr. Runes admits, He would naturally perhaps not mind infinite ways of approaching Him. Why then does the learned Doctor put himself out to make a rigid statement which sternly commands all men, who are born of different natures, to follow up one single narrow track to reach Him who is the Vast and All-Pervading ? Is the truth, based on experience and proclaimed by the Wise, that various streams flowing down from different hill-tops join ultimately in the one Ocean, a phantasmagoria ?

In fact what really matters is not the way one follows. Whatever helps one to reach the ultimate goal one should sincerely follow. To reach Him by whatever means and live in Him forever is the sole thing that should concern man. It should be regarded as a rare fortune if one can straight away concentrate on God without the help of a Guru, a physical or mental symbol. But that seldom occurs except in the case of a very few privileged beings who are

greatly evolved and unless God himself comes upon them and embraces them and floods them with his Light and Love. Again, men are of diverse natures. And if one finds a beautiful image of God as a right means and help to realise God, why should one not worship it ? Sri Ramakrishna, a harmonious synthesis of realisations of all religions through their diverse ways, had come to remain as a towering example in this respect. Even after realisation he did not cease to worship the image of Kali, the Divine Mother whom he experienced and declared as both Personal and Impersonal and at the same time transcending all.

And what should prevent one who believes in a personal God, except a blind prejudiced mental obsession, from believing at the same time in the impersonal One and *vice versa*. For he knows very well that the personal and the impersonal are but the two sides or poises of the same Reality. This truth, which is to the Hindu as natural as anything, has ever remained a tremendous puzzle to the Semitic Religions. Dr. Runes, who proudly claims to be a Jew towards the end of the book, here does not come out of his religious fold to have a clear understanding of the thought of other religious systems in this matter. He reads, on the contrary, his own limited ideas into them.

He says that the Pagan "wants a man-god, a visible, walking, talking and personal god or goddess". Should God the Almighty be then dammed up thus by the fickle vanity of the human brain in the invisible heavens forever ? If that is so, is the Kingdom of Heaven upon earth declared by Christ a sheer myth ? And what is Christ if not a visible, walking, talking man-god or rather God-man in flesh and blood in this tangible world of ours ?

Dr. Runes fails to see that the pagan, for instance the Hindu, does not take the stone or gold image as the whole Divine itself but as a manifestation, a symbolic means towards the Divine. The Hebrew may not be using such physical symbols. But he is using mental or idea-symbols while describing the eternal Godhead. Dr. Runes himself takes the help of the idea-forms in talking or writing about God. He may have an aversion or even a contempt, which is not fair, for the stone image of God. But all the same in its place he is taking the aid of an idea-image of God. A mental formula for That which is beyond mind is essentially as much an image as a physical form : it is only a different kind of image, but image it is inasmuch as it tries to reflect or represent the ultra-mental Reality. Then why have contempt for that which serves man as a wonderful means to a splendid spiritual End ? The Supreme is bound neither by mental nor physical representations of Him, but He may accept the latter just as well as the former. Not to see this would argue narrowness of perception. We feel sure that Dr. Runes who often reveals a wide and plastic intelligence will not long limit himself in this matter.

(To be concluded)

POORNA

BOOKS IN THE BALANCE

Comfort the Dreamer (Poems) by *Barbara Leslie Jordan*. Published by The Arkwright Press, New York. Price \$ 3.00

It is always with a mixed feeling of diffidence and curiosity that I ever open any collection of contemporary poetry. For no one knows over what perilous seas the unchartered originality of modern poets will be driving us.

I am happy to find that the Poet under review does not go back to the Aboriginal in quest of the Original, nor does she care to fathom the dark waters of remote centuries. At times she seems to be in the midst of her own homely circle where she speaks of precious little this and that—precious not only to those who surround her, but to any individual, thanks to the Poet's intimate and stark way of telling about them in an utterly frank tone, giving them a stamp of the inner sense. But mostly she seems to meet herself all alone. At times she looks back at her past, as in the poem 'Late Spring Frost' where she writes, 'I had two pear trees, flowering and white'—but,

I woke this morning, roused by slanted light
To see that frost has come without a sound.
And every fragile petal, bruised and dead,
Is hurled by wind against indifferent ground.
I had two pear trees, flowering and white.

This poem, by its definite pictures as well as by its subdued depth of emotional implication reminds one of traditional Japanese poetry.

At other times the Poet analyses her present state, her 'Maturity', and deplores, in a tone dignified yet touching,

I can accept the death of roses now,
Or autumn's vivid dying, since I must.
And I can watch bright petals fall, or leaves
Shrivel and turn to aromatic dust
Without the old rebellion, the old pain.

And, in contrast to what she could not bear in her youth, she enumerates the details which no more stir her. But still the only thing she cannot bear

BOOKS IN THE BALANCE

...is when I hear the wind
Lash at the window-panes, remembering
A time of love which will not come again.
(‘Maturity’)

Precisely this has been the feeling of singers down the ages who, with the eating of the Fruit of Knowledge, feel a nostalgic aspiration for the glory that is no more, for the glory of Innocence.

Or else the Poet, like Yeats (‘When you are old and grey and full of sleep’) or like Tagore (‘After a century from this day’) projects herself, with the light of her imagination, on the dim screen of the Future and says :

This is a summary then, a document
Containing much and with much more omitted,
The cancelled words, the errors, these are missing ;
They were the manuscript, this the revision.
On this immaculate page, the black words march
Written in love, in hope that when you read them
You will feel this, will understand, accept.
You must remember always that I loved you.
(‘Letters to the Future—No. 4’)

At times the Poet stands up to break away from all convention and hypocrisy ; she attacks, in her own poised manner, the false aspect of things as in the poem ‘False Colors’ :

Widows wear black.....
And show their sorrow, everyplace.

But some, more widowed, must be gay,
Must flaunt a flower in their hair.
Though pride sustains them through the day,
Midnights have witnessed their despair.

(‘False Colors’)

Here she becomes one with the ‘more widowed’ and consequently makes herself the mouthpiece of that hidden suffering behind the apparent smile.

The Poet has an inkling of the ‘third eye’, the inner sight, which transcends the day-to-day reality and arrives at the surrealistic or the symbolist state of seeing. The poem ‘Chromatics’ at once reminds the reader of the

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French Symbolist Masters (*viz.* Baudelaire, Mallarmé and Rimbaud) who saw colours emanating from the vowels or who spoke of a 'perfume fresh like a child's flesh, rich like an oboe, and green like a forest'; the present Poet writes :

Colours are music.
Yellow is laughter,
Young voices singing
A carol of praise.
Like violins muted,
Lilac is softer,
Melody clinging
In delicate phrase.

It is no fancy ; a direct identification throbs behind these lines and the last four, read aloud, thrills the reader with the same tender joy as would a passage of subdued response in Beethoven's 'Violin Concerto'. This experience, pushed further, arrives at other wonders such as :

Scarlet, a fanfare
Of trumpets blowing,
Notes underscored of
Fortissimo beat.
Green in the tempo
Of all things growing,
The closing chord of
A theme complete.

The reader does not want to stop there ; spontaneously the question comes up, 'What about the other colours ?'

The Poet is not only fascinating, but also impressive by the way she talks of great values with the help of our ordinary everyday speech which acquires a strange power through a bare beauty teasing the reader with the obligation to enjoy even the minute undertones of her sensitive self. Thus, when she says, '...Everyone / Admires eagles. I love swallows best,' the reader for the time-being at least would go with the Poet's predilection for the humbler one. This phrase is so typical of the Poet in the totality of herself and of her mood, that I need no more give myself the trouble to look for other presentable aspects of her from all these 48 poems. But, before concluding this appreciation, a few questions I would ask.

Could not the Poet be a little more mobile, unrestrained, passionate in her

rhythm, and must she often spare one more drop of the initial intoxication, in order to be deliberate, sober ? Could she not plunge oftener beyond the graceful building mind into that elemental energy that is directly creative by sheer vision and, whether occupied with esoteric themes or familiar, whether expressing itself chastely or colourfully, brings its works to us drenched in revelation ? What she can do is broadly indicated without being quite exemplified in her last poem, the sonnet 'Free Fall', which is one of her most effective in a mental manner. It points towards the depth-speech which should and can be this Poet's, if she allows herself a free fall into the light of what Sri Aurobindo has divined as 'the Future Poetry'. Barbara Leslie Jordan's sonnet runs :

FREE FALL

No guided missile, racing past the sun,
Leaving behind the green, sweet hills of earth,
Takes such a fateful journey as the one
Confronting us the instant of our birth.
In all the universe, we will not find
Among known stars or distant nebulae
A vaster darkness than is in our minds
Who, being born, must now commence to die.

Just as the thrusting rocket in the air
Resists the downward pull of gravity
To reach unfathomed space, so we must dare
To break the barrier of self, fall free
Into a wider world, and thus prepare
To leave life's orbit for eternity.

PRITHWINDRA

MOTHER INDIA

Srinvantu (English), Editor, Promode Kumar Sen, Srinvantu Karyalaya, 63, College Street, Calcutta-12. Yearly Subscription Rs. 6 ; single copy 50 Np. Pages 18-20

Samarpan (Hindi), Editor, Din Dayal Sharma, Sri Aurobindo Jnana Mandir, 18/1, Shakti Nagar, Delhi-6. Yearly Subscription Rs. 4 ; single copy 40 Np. Pages 14-16.

These two promising monthlies seek to diffuse the Yoga and philosophy of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother. With its attractive tricolour title cover, *SRINVANTU* ("Hearken"), in spite of its financial difficulties, holds aloft its bold 'Call' for the life divine of Sri Aurobindo's vision and realisation. It has from January started to appear every month instead of every quarter. The Hindi *SAMARPAN* with its fine cover and clear printing, after a short lapse of time, comes up from January with greater courage and reinforced vigour. We hope that this paper will bring to its readers more and more nourishing and palatable food for thought and soul. Its motto :

"Whatever thou may'st do, whatever hear,
Whatever thy giving and oblation be,
Whatever thou, O son of Kunti, see,
To me surrender and in offering bear."

(*Sri Krishna in the Gita*)

is indeed appropriate for an official organ like this of the Sri Aurobindo Centre of Delhi, Sri Aurobindo's Yoga being essentially the Yoga of complete surrender to the Divine.

We have nothing but good wishes for these monthlies, and hope that they will cater to an increasing number of spiritual aspirants in their endeavour to live up to the great ideals of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother.

"BANDA"

“NEW WORLD UNION” IN AWAKENING AFRICA

WE have returned from our two-months' tour of East and Central Africa with lively gratitude for the Mother's unfailing Grace and for the response to the Call of the "New World" which we received from all sections of the people of that rapidly awakening continent. To be witnesses of the dawn of freedom in the eyes of a race which has suffered so much violation of the spirit of oneness through the centuries is a moving experience. And to talk with them of the freedom in the Spirit for which the Master and the Mother and the New World Union stand, and which is the best assurance of Africa's future harmony and progress, has been our high privilege on this tour.

Some of the ninety fellow-inmates of the Ashram who are from Africa had led us to expect evidence of material and cultural advancement there, but we were astonished at the extent of it in all of the cities and towns which we visited. Such clean, modern and prosperous cities we have seldom seen anywhere. They are the nerve centres of a land bursting with resources, and on the march.

Yet these striking signs of material prosperity are grounds for concern, rather than pride, for we see in East and Central Africa a replica of the great *world* problem : How can we find the spiritual development to match and master the material progress ?

We shall not risk boring our readers with a detailed chronicle, a place-by-place account, but try to focus on the high lights and some summary impressions. We shall barely mention the places visited, for these are names dear to a multitude of Indian relatives, specially in Gujarat and Saurashtra. In East Africa (Kenya, Uganda, Tanganyika) they are Mombasa, Nairobi, Tikha, Arusha, Moshi, Nakuru, Kericho, Kisumu, Miwani, Kakkira, Jinja, Lugazi, Kampala, Masaka, Bukoba, Mwanza, Dar-es-Salaam, and in Central Africa (Nyasaland, Southern and Northern Rhodesia) : Blantyre, Salisbury, Bulawayo, Livingstone, Broken Hill, Lusaka, Ndola and Lwanshya.

The hospitality accorded to these pilgrims of the New World Union was indeed overwhelming and unforgettable, despite the fact that there are many who go there from India on spiritual and other missions. We believe that this great welcome was partly because of the obvious timeliness and urgency of this cause, particularly in Africa ; partly because of the general high regard for the Ashram which is our home ; and also because everywhere in East Africa

our Secretary-Treasurer, A.B. Patel, is esteemed by those who met us, of whatever community—African, Arab, Asian or European. True, some of them still felt aggrieved that he had “abandoned” the Indian community and the Kenya Government (where he had been a Minister) and had settled in Pondicherry. But we pointed out that “A.B.” seems, in his own way, to be following in his Master’s footsteps in leaving the service of the nation for an even higher service, being now engaged in a cause which concerns the whole world and its future.

Our Indian brothers in Africa form very largely the commercial community. Increasingly they are awakening to the fact that if they wish to make their future in Africa they must commend themselves to, and even identify themselves with, the Africans. We pray that it may not be another instance of “too little and too late”. The near future will tell. As is the tendency everywhere, we found in Africa that the various racial groups tend to practise unintentional segregation simply by social inertia. It will therefore require a vigorous and persevering effort to build bridges where walls now exist. We found among our Indian brothers and sisters much spiritual and cultural hunger and openness to higher values, despite the encroachments of high-pressure secular modernism.

We were deeply impressed by the qualities of heart and spirit of the Africans we met. Admittedly they were a select few, but they convinced us of the truth of what Dr. Fosbrook, the Director of the Rhodes-Livingstone Institute of Social Research in Lusaka, Northern Rhodesia, told us. He declared, with warmth, that he had found that those Africans who had not been spoiled by metropolitan “civilisation” had a rare spiritual sensitivity and awareness. And the keen questions put to us by these sons of Africa showed also their intellectual calibre.

Tanganyika is a shining example of fraternal partnership between the vast African majority and the other communities. This is largely because of the magnanimous and far-sighted leadership of the nationalist movement in the person of Mr. Julius Nyerere. We thrilled as we read the press report of his plea to his fellow-Africans not to prove themselves “hypocrites” by treating in an unbrotherly fashion their Indian and European fellow-citizens when the power is transferred to African hands. He said in substance : “We who in our struggle for freedom have appealed to the principles of brotherhood and equality, let us not abandon those principles when we come to power.” This was shortly before the announcement that self-government for Tanganyika will come in October.

A few days later we had the privilege of an interview with this nationalist leader in Dar-es-Salaam. Twice in our memorable half-hour with him his

face lit up with enthusiasm ; once when, in response to what we had said about man's destiny in terms of a distinct upward step in the evolution of human consciousness, he declared his faith in the almost unlimited perfectibility of human nature ; and again when he said that, as he watched the world scene, he had the feeling that the spirit of oneness was growing apace, and one of these days there would be a grand raising of the curtain and human unity would be in the centre of the stage ! He added about the New World Union, “Wherever there is oneness, I am ready to go the limit.” Having felt something of the joy of fraternal harmony in Tanganyika, we pray that a deeper joy, even the Ananda, may one day come, through the spiritual genius of the African people in contact with the people of India.

Mr. Paul Bomani, head of the powerful cooperative movement in Tanganyika and “right-hand” of Mr. Nyerere, was enthusiastic about N.W.U. and said, “Next time you visit Africa you must let us hold our own mass meeting where you can present this cause.” He also bade us publish our literature in Swahili, the common language of East Africa, as we are taking steps to do.

The urgent question in Africa, where “U̇hūrū” (freedom) is the magic word today, as “Swaraj” was in India, is whether the pressure for change—the long pent-up resentment and urge for liberation—will take a constructive direction or a destructive one. All the while, in the background, there are world forces ready to take advantage of such a situation for their own ends. Here is where the timeliness of the New World Union for Africa looms up. The clear lesson of history is that freedom, equality, peace are insecure so long as they are not built on a truly spiritual foundation. Already, in Asia and Africa during the last decade, there has been a tendency for nations, their political freedom attained, to resort to dictatorship. We found leaders of the African, Indian and European communities recognising the timeliness and urgency of N.W.U. for Africa, not only because this movement encourages us to give priority to the spiritual and its demands on all our life, but also because it points to the secret of the unity which Africa and the world desperately need for steady, harmonious progress. Furthermore, this movement encourages us to come to grips with our key problem, the ego problem, individual and collective. It is only on the soul level that we can be truly one. As a harmonious relationship between individuals is insured only when the individual ego is finally replaced by the individual soul, so, as the ‘New World Union advocates, we as world citizens must strive to see that the national egos, so long in human history rampantly self-assertive, give way to the nation-souls.

An English Provincial Commissioner, presiding over one of our public meetings, declared in both his opening and closing remarks that this Union was very timely and urgent for all communities in Africa, because “time is running

short". Another, who had been knighted for distinguished public service, in giving thanks for one of our Rotary talks, expressed his appreciation of N.W.U. as "one of the great movements of history". We accept this characterisation of N. W. U., despite our personal shortcomings, because of its vast potentialities and the blessing of all the "spiritual lights" to whom we have introduced it.

In Africa, as in India, the spiritual personalities we were privileged to meet assured us of their blessing and support for the Union. Among them were : Hirji Bapa, an itinerant saint who seems to kindle the fires of devotion in the hearts of the common people and who has not only Indians but Africans among his disciples; whole-hearted French Roman Catholic Bishop Lanctot of Bukoba who, while presiding over our public meeting, said that although he could not agree with some of our philosophy, he wanted to commend to his people and the public this movement for peace on spiritual foundations; the gracious and saintly Mother Superior of the "Poor Clares" convent in Mwanza who assured us that they would remember this movement and us in their prayer vigils which continued day and night.

Then we cannot forget the Mayor of Kampala, His Worship, Mr. Kulubya, who when we asked him what he thought of the likely response to N.W.U. in Africa replied that we should feel highly privileged to be sowers of the divine seed and should leave the question of the harvest entirely in the Divine Hands. An Anglican Father declared, "This is God's movement", and followed up by volunteering his services to N.W.U.

In a small conference in Nairobi just before our return, we ventured to say of the role of the New World Union in East Africa, which is a real testing ground, a laboratory for this infant movement, that it could contribute to the New Africa in the New World in the following ways :

1. By helping to build up an integral spiritual citizenship.
2. By encouraging the creation of unity and harmony at all levels, in all circles of society, not only by fostering that "generous consideration" of others which is the best of social graces; not only by helping to spread the spirit which the wisely magnanimous Nyerere is generating in Tanganyika; but specially by trying to inspire constantly an aspiration and quest for the deeper spiritual springs, the only sure foundation for unity and peace.
3. By spreading the idea of creative justice, justice to the man-in-the-making in contrast to the usual bare legal justice.
4. An active service of reconciliation in situations in which N.W.U. might be invited to help, with "peace teams" composed of its members from African, Asian, and European communities working together to create understanding and cooperation.

“NEW WORLD UNION” IN AWAKENING AFRICA

5. By the spiritual awakening and growth of the members, which will always be basic.

Our three days in Aden, returning home, were fruitful. In addition to the usual meetings, we were privileged to speak briefly at the great mass meeting on India's Republic Day. In Aden we found an eager response to N.W.U. from Indians, Arabs and Europeans.

In every one of the twenty-six cities and towns visited we were able to start an N.W.U. unit, a nucleus of spiritual seekers and workers. Much now depends on the effectiveness of the steps we are taking to help these units to carry on, and to grow from strength to strength.

Glancing back over the 14,000 miles of our tour, we are deeply moved by the evidences that the divine Force, which is so manifestly active on the world scene today, has been potently at work throughout our long Africa pilgrimage. And that is the best assurance for the long road ahead, through the World Conference—and beyond.

JAY SMITH

THE SUKTA 10-95 OF URVASI AND PURURAVAS IN THE *RIGVEDA* AND THEIR LEGEND IN OTHER WRITINGS

(Concluded from the March issue)

10-95-11 :—*ḡignīṣe, ithā, gopīthyāya, hi, dadhāth, tat, purūravaḥ, me, ojaḥ; aśāsam, tvā, viduṣī, sasmin, ahan, na, me, ā, aśṛṇoḥ, kim, abhuk, vadāsi.*

Anvaya :—*ḡignīṣe ithā hi gopīthyāya*=thou hast generated indeed a son for protecting the earth ; *purūravaḥ me ojaḥ tat dadhātha*=therefore thou hast established my power (in him on earth) ; *viduṣī aśāsam tvā*=knowing I warned thee ; *sasmin ahan*=on that day ; *na me aśṛṇoḥ*=but thou didst not hear me ; *kim abhuk vadāsi*=what sayest thou when nothing avails thee?

Grammar :—*Bhuj* is utility ; *a-bhuj*=one for whom there is no utility :

Bhavartha :—Thou hast generated indeed a son for protecting the earth ; therefore thou hast established my power (in him on earth) ; I knew and warned thee on that day ; but thou didst not hear me ; when nothing avails thee what sayest thou ?

Notes :—Urvasi feels glad of the birth of a son to her and says she warned Pururavas to live a life of a higher ideal than mere vital enjoyment and since he did not care, she had to leave him.

10-95-12 :—*Kadā, sūnuḥ, pītaram, jātaḥ, ichāt, cakran, na, aśru, vartayat, vi-jānan; kaḥ, dāmpatī, sa-manasā, viyūyot, adha, yat, agniā, śvaśuriṣudādayat.*

Anvaya :—*Kadā sūnuḥ jātaḥ pītaram icchāt*=when the son that is born of thee seeks his father ; *vi-jānan*=knowing this ; *na cakran*=mourner-like ; *aśruvartayat*=do you weep ; *kaḥ viyūyot dāmpatī samanasā*=who shall divide the accordant husband and wife ; *adha yat agniḥ śvaśuriṣu dādayat*=now that Fire shall be kept burning in thy father-in-law's house.

Grammar :—*Cakran* is formed from the Red. Stem of root *krand* ; it becomes *cakrand* ; but two consonants cannot remain at the end ; so it becomes *cakran*.

Bhavartha :—When the son that is born of thee seeks his father, knowing this, mourner-like should she weep ? Who shall divide the accordant husband and wife now that Fire shall be kept burning in her father-in-law's house ?

Notes :—When the son that is born of Urvasi is brought to the presence of Pururavas and when she knows this she weeps in sorrow, because she too

did not want to leave Pururavas and her son and go to Indraloka. Hearing from her of Indra's command that she should leave him as soon as he sees his son born in her, and seeing her weeping he complains about the action of the gods in deciding like this and utters the second sentence in the Mantra and decides that it shall not be so, specially because the sacrificial Fire will be kept burning by his son.

10-95-13 :—*Prati, bravāṇi, vartayate, aśru, cakran, na, krandat, ā-dhye, śivāyai ; pra, tat, te, hinava, yat, te, asme, parā, ihi, astam, nahi, mūra, mā, āpaḥ.*

Anvaya :—*Vartayate aśru*=to him who sheds tears ; *prati bravāṇi*=give my answer ; *cakran*=weeping ; *na krandat*=he shall not implore piteously ; *ā-dhye śivāyai*=for care that blesses ; *yat te asme*=that which is thine in us ; *prahinava tat te*=that I send thee ; *mūra*=O ignorant one ; *parā ihi astam*=go home ; *nahi mā āpaḥ*=you have not won me.

Grammar :—*Ā-dhye* and *śivāyai* are both in dative ; *ādhi*=care, anxiety.

Bhavartha :—I answer him that sheds tears ; weeping he shall not implore piteously for the care that blesses ; that which is thine between us I give thee ; O ignorant one, go home ; thou hast not won me.

Notes :—Seeing all this Ayus sheds tears and wants his father to remain with him till he is capable of ruling his kingdom by himself ; Pururavas replies that his son does not need his help. At this Urvasi gives the answer contained in this Mantra, that Ayus shall not be helpless and that Pururavas should not leave him thus alone.

10-95-14 :—*Su-devaḥ, adya, pra, patet, anāvṛt, parā-vatam, paramām, gantavai, u ; adha, śayīta, niḥ-ṛteḥ, upasthe, adha, enam, vṛkāḥ, rabhasāsaḥ, adyuh.*

Anvaya :—*Su-devaḥ*=he who has been favoured by the gods ; *adya pra patet*=shall fly today ; *anāvṛt*=without returning ; *paramām parāvatam*=to the farthest distance ; *gantavai*=to seek ; *adha*=then ; *śayīta niḥ-ṛteḥ upasthe*=let his bed be in destruction's bosom ; *enam vṛkāḥ rabhasāsaḥ adyuh*=let the fierce wolves devour him.

Bhavartha :—The god-favoured Pururavas shall flee without returning today to the farthest distance to seek Urvasi ; then let his bed be in destruction's bosom and let fierce wolves devour him.

Notes :—Pururavas proclaims to Urvasi his ideal and says that he followed it for its own sake alone, namely, the pursuit of love for the beauty and love of woman, and that he has no other higher ideal than that in life on earth.

10-95-15 :—*Purūravaḥ, mā, mṛthāḥ, mā, prapaptaḥ, mā, tvā, vṛkāsaḥ, aśivāsaḥ, u, kṣat ; nā, vai, straināni, sakhyāni, santi, sālā, vṛkānām, hṛdayāni, etā.*

Anvaya :—*Purūravaḥ mā mṛthāḥ*=O Pururavas, do not die ; *mā prapaptaḥ*=not run away ; *vṛkāsaḥ aśivāsaḥ tvā mā kṣat*=let not the evil wolves devour

thee ; *na vai straiṇāni sakhyāni santi*—there can be no lasting friendship with women ; *etā hṛdayāni vṛkṇām sālā*—these hearts of women are those of the wolves.

Bhavartha :—O Pururavas ! do not die, nor run away ; let not the evil wolves devour thee ; there can be no lasting friendship with women ; these hearts of women are like those of wolves.

Notes :—Urvasi asks him not to destroy himself in seeking the beauty and love of woman ; for that is not the highest ideal of man and, besides, the hearts of women are like those of wolves.

10-95-16 :—*Yat, virūpā, acaram, martyeṣu, avasam, rātrih, śaradaḥ, catasraḥ* :—*ghṛtasya, stokam, sakṛt, ahnaḥ, āśnām, tāt, eva, idam, tatṛpāṇā, carāmi*.

Anvaya :—*Yat virūpā acaram martyeṣu*—when in altered form I roamed amongst men ; *avasam rātrih śaradaḥ catasraḥ*—and lived four autumns of nights amongst them ; *sakṛt ahnaḥāśnām ghṛtasya stokam*—I tasted once a day a drop of butter ; *tāt eva idam tatṛpāṇā carāmi*—and even now contented with that I move.

Bhavartha :—When in altered form I roamed and lived four autumns of nights amongst men, I tasted once a day a drop of clarified butter and even now contented with that I move.

Notes :—Urvasi continues that when she in altered form roamed the earth, she did not mourn for anybody or for anything and lived a well-contented life.

10-95-17 :—*Antarikṣa-prām, rajasaḥ, vimānīm, upa, śikṣāmi, urvaśim, vasiṣṭhaḥ* :—*upa, tvā, rātrih, su-kṛtasya, tiṣṭhat, ni, vartasva, hṛdayam, tapyate, me*.

Anvaya :—*Vasiṣṭhaḥ upa śikṣāmi*—I, the best of her lovers invite ; *urvaśim vimānīm rajasaḥ*—Urvasi, the measurer of Rajas ; *antarikṣa-prām*—the filler of mid-worlds ; *su-kṛtasya rātrih tvā upa tiṣṭhat*—let the gift of the doer of good deeds stay near you ; *nivartasva me hṛdayam tapyate*—mayst thou return for my heart is burning.

Bhavartha :—I, the best of her lovers, invite Urvasi, the measurer of Rajas, the filler of mid-worlds ; let the gift of the doer of good-deeds stay near you ; mayest thou return for my heart is burning.

Notes :—Pururavas persists in his seeking for the love and beauty of Urvasi and mourns and begs her ; if he cannot succeed he will rather die in his pursuit.

10-95-18 :—*Iti, tvā, devāḥ, ime, āhuḥ, eḷa, yathā, im, etat, bhavasi, mṛtyu-bandhuḥ, prajā, te, devān, haviṣā, yajāti, svarge, u, tvam, api, mādayāse*.

Anvaya :—*Ila*—O son of Ila ; *iti tvā devāḥ āhuḥ ime*—thus speak the gods of thee ; *yathā etat mṛtyu-bandhuḥ*—since you are now bound to this death ;

THE SUKTA 10-95 OF URVASI AND PURURAVAS IN THE RIGVEDA

bhavasi im—become that ; *te prajā*—thy progeny ; *yajāti devān haviṣā*—will worship gods with oblations ; *svarge tvam api mādayāse*—and thou too will enjoy in heaven.

Bhavartha :—O son of Ila, thus speak the gods of thee, since thou art now bound to death, thou becomest that ; thy progeny will worship gods with oblations and thou too wilt enjoy in heaven.

Notes :—Urvasi says that since he is bound to die with no higher aspiration than the one he had, and since his sons will worship the gods and continue the sacrificial path of spiritual evolution of man on earth, his instrumentality in the work was not needed ; so success for him in the pursuit of his own ideal has been sanctioned by the gods and he may, from then on, live with Urvasi in Svarga.

In the course of eighteen Mantras the Rigvedic Sukta, 10-95, covers all the important psychological happenings in the lives of Urvasi and Pururavas. The exact physical event which led to the psychological change is not always given. The Puranic version may perhaps be more true to the Sukta so far as physical facts are concerned ; but so far as psychological factors are concerned Sri Aurobindo's poem *Urvasi* and his translation of *Vikramorvasie* depict the truth of their lives more significantly.

Pururavas, a humanised demi-god of a certain vital world lower than that of pure sense-mind, is universal in his actions, mighty, noble, persevering but voluptuous. The motive-force of the life-idea in him is more a pursuit of woman's love and beauty than the following of the Aryan ideal of the sacrificial path of spiritual evolution on earth. So long as he lived on earth, if he pursued the Aryan path of sacrificial life it was more to win the love of Urvasi than for the sake of that ideal itself. When finally he staked all his life for that pursuit, the gods did not allow him to die unfulfilled in his pursuit, and he was crowned with success. Urvasi is a goddess of the pure sense-mind and is a conscious instrument in the hands of the Mind-gods to promote the Aryan ideal of the sacrificial path.

The Gods are tydal beings while men are evolutionary beings. If the gods want to go to a higher world than that in which they live, they have to take human births and strive for it on earth. For Pururavas the way was open to aspire and strive for a higher world than that of Gandharva loka but he was satisfied with it, strove for it and succeeded in getting it.

NARAYANA C. REDDY

Students' Section

RÉPONSES—ANSWERS

Q. Douce Mère, tu m'avais écrit : "Il faut entrer en rapport conscient avec son être psychique, aspirer à le connaître et à le sentir, s'ouvrir pour recevoir son influence, et prendre grand soin de le suivre très scrupuleusement et très sincèrement. Car c'est cela le point de départ indispensable." Mais, Douce Mère, je ne sais pas comment le faire. Je trouve plus facile quand je pense à toi, et que j'essaye d'entrer en rapport avec toi, et d'ouvrir à toi.

Q. Sweet Mother, you have written : "It is necessary to enter into conscious contact with one's psychic being, aspire to know it and to feel it, open oneself to receive its influence, and take great care to follow it very scrupulously and very sincerely. For, that is the indispensable starting point." But, sweet Mother, I don't know how to do it. I find things more easy when I think of you and when I try to enter into contact with you, and to open to you.

R. Ceci aussi est un moyen qui est certainement aussi bon que l'autre. Il y a de nombreux chemins pour atteindre à la réalisation de soi, et chacun choisir celui qui lui vient le plus naturellement.

Mais chaque moyen a ses exigences pour être vraiment efficace.

En pensant à moi, ce n'est pas seulement à la personne extérieure que tu dois penser, mais à ce qu'elle représente, à ce qui se tient derrière elle. Car il ne faut jamais oublier que la personne extérieure n'est que la forme et le symbole d'une Réalité éternelle, et à travers l'apparence physique c'est à cette Réalité supérieure qu'il faut s'adresser. L'être physique ne pourra devenir vraiment expressif de la Réalité éternelle que lorsqu'il sera complètement transformé par la manifestation supramentale. Et jusque là, c'est à travers lui qu'il faut trouver la Vérité.

A. This also is a means which is certainly as good as the other.

There are numerous ways to reach self-realisation, and each should choose that which comes to him the most naturally.

But each means has its demands in order to be truly effective.

In thinking of me, it is not only of the outer person that you should think, but of what she represents, of what stands behind her. For, we must never forget that the outer person is only the form and the symbol of an eternal Reality, and through the physical appearance it is to this higher reality that one should address oneself. The physical being will only be able to express truly the eternal Reality when it will be completely transformed by the supra-mental manifestation. And, until then, it is *through* it that one should find the Truth.

22-9-1959

THE MOTHER

Q. Douce Mère, est-ce que c'est possible d'avoir un contrôle sur soi pendant le sommeil ? Si, par exemple, je veux te voir dans mes rêves, est-ce que je peux le faire exprès ?

Q. Sweet Mother, is it possible to have self-control during sleep ? If, for example, I want to see you in my dreams, can I do it at will ?

R. Le contrôle pendant le sommeil est tout à fait possible et il est progressif si on persiste dans l'effort. On commence par se souvenir de ses rêves, puis, peu à peu, on demeure de plus en plus conscient pendant son sommeil et non seulement on peut contrôler ses rêves, mais on peut diriger et organiser ses activités dans le sommeil.

Si tu persistes dans ta volonté et dans tes tentatives, tu es sûre d'apprendre à venir me trouver la nuit pendant ton sommeil et ensuite de te souvenir de ce qui s'est passé.

Pour cela deux choses sont nécessaires que tu dois développer par l'aspiration et par l'effort calme et persistant.

1) Concentrer ta pensée sur la volonté de venir me trouver et, d'abord par un effort d'imagination, ensuite de façon tangible et de plus en plus réelle, suivre cette pensée jusqu'en ma présence.

2) Etablir une sorte de pont entre la conscience de veille et la conscience de sommeil, afin qu'en se réveillant on se souvienne de ce qui s'est passé.

Il se peut qu'on réussisse immédiatement, le plus souvent cela prend un certain temps et il faut persister dans la tentative.

A. The control during sleep is altogether possible and it is progressive if you persist in the effort. You begin by recollecting your dreams, then, little by little, you remain more and more conscious during your sleep and not only

can you control your dreams but you can direct and organise your activities during the sleep.

If you persist in your will and in your attempts, you will surely learn to come and find me at night during your sleep and afterwards to remember what happened.

For this, two things are necessary, which you should develop by aspiration and by calm and persistent effort.

1) Concentrate your thought on the will to come and find me and, first by an effort of imagination and afterwards in a tangible and more and more real way, follow this thought up to my presence.

2) Establish a sort of bridge between the waking consciousness and the sleeping, so that on waking up you remember what has happened.

It may be that one succeeds immediately, most often it takes a certain time and one must persist in the attempt.

25-9-1959

THE MOTHER

Q. Douce Mère, quel est le rôle de l'âme ?

Q. Sweet Mother, what is the function of the soul ?

R. Mais, sans âme nous n'existerions pas !

L'âme, c'est ce qui sort du Divin sans jamais Le quitter, et revient au Divin sans cesser d'être manifeste.

L'âme, c'est le Divin fait individu sans cesser d'être Divin.

Dans l'âme, l'individu et le Divin sont un éternellement; ainsi trouver son âme c'est trouver Dieu; s'identifier à son âme c'est s'unir au Divin.

On peut donc dire que le rôle de l'âme est de faire de l'homme un être véritable.

A. But without the soul we could not exist !

The soul is that which comes from the Divine without ever leaving Him, and returns to the Divine without ceasing to be manifest.

The soul is the Divine made individual without ceasing to be Divine.

In the soul, the individual and the Divine are eternally one; thus to find one's soul is to find God; to identify oneself with one's soul is to unite oneself with God.

One can therefore say that the function of the soul is to make of man a true being.

29-9-1959

THE MOTHER

RÉPONSES—ANSWERS

Q. Douce Mère, est-ce qu'il y a quelque chose comme 'la bonne chance' et 'la mauvaise chance', ou est-ce que c'est quelque chose qu'on crée pour soi-même ?

Q. Sweet Mother, is there anything like 'good luck' and 'bad luck' or is it something that one creates for oneself ?

R. Il n'existe rien qu'on puisse vraiment appeler *chance*. Ce que les hommes appellent chance ce sont des *effets* dont ils ne connaissent pas les *causes*.

Il n'y a rien non plus qui soit en soi-même une bonne ou une mauvaise chance, chacun qualifie de bonnes ou de mauvaises les circonstances selon qu'elles lui sont plus ou moins favorables ; et cette appréciation elle-même est très superficielle et ignorante, car il faut être déjà un grand sage pour savoir ce qui est vraiment favorable, ou non, pour soi-même.

De plus, le même évènement peut être très bon pour l'un et, en même temps, très mauvais pour un autre. Ces appréciations sont purement subjectives et dépendent de la réaction de chacun aux contacts venant du dehors.

Finalement, les circonstances de notre vie, le milieu dans lequel nous vivons, et la manière d'être des gens à notre égard, sont l'expression, la projection objective de ce que nous sommes nous-mêmes, au dedans et au dehors. On peut donc dire d'une façon certaine, que ce que nous portons en nous-mêmes dans tous nos états d'être, mentalement, vitalement et physiquement, c'est cela qui constitue notre vie objectivée dans ce qui nous entoure.

Et ceci est facilement vérifiable car à mesure que nous faisons des progrès et que nous avançons vers la perfection, les circonstances aussi progressent.

De même, pour ceux qui dégénèrent et reculent, les circonstances de leur vie aussi détériorent.

A. There exists nothing which one can truly call *luck*. What men call luck are the *effects* whose *causes* they do not know.

Neither is there anything that is in itself a good or a bad luck ; each one qualifies circumstances as good or bad according as they are more or less favourable to him ; and this appraisal itself is very superficial and ignorant, for one must already be a great sage in order to know what is for oneself truly favourable or not.

Further, the same event can be very good for one and, at the same time, very bad for another. These appraisals are purely subjective and depend on each one's reactions to the touches coming from outside.

Lastly, the circumstances of our life, the sphere in which we live, and people's attitude in regard to us, are the expression, the objective projection

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of what we ourselves are, within and without. One can therefore say with certainty that what we carry within ourselves in all the states of being, mentally, vitally and physically, is that which constitutes our life objectified in all our environment.

And this is easily verifiable, for in the measure in which we make improvements and advance towards perfection the circumstances also improve.

In the same way, for those who degenerate and fall back, the circumstances of their lives also grow worse.

5-10-1959

THE MOTHER

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. Here and there the material is slightly rearranged in the interests of unity of theme. 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 FIFTEEN

THE bell tolls us back to the deeply melodious ring with which Sri Aurobindo starts the felicity of phrase in

All can be done if the God-touch is there.

A grand announcement is made with a controlled power of musical language. But the line is felicitous not only because it is beautifully moving in a poisedly powerful way : it is felicitous also because it has a subdued piquancy exquisitely held in the contrast between "All" and "touch". It says that everything is possible—and the omni-possibility is said to be compassed by nothing more than a touch of God : one finger of light brought by the hand of His Grace can dissolve adamantine difficulties, ages of massive darkness. And observe how the vowel-quantities help out the significance. The smallness required of the miraculous agency is conveyed by the short though stressed vowels in "God-touch", while the bigness of what is miraculously conquerable is there in the long stressed vowel of "All". But the conquest of the apparently big by the apparently small is shown by the stressed yet short vowel of "done" which anticipates and prepares the quantities of "God-touch". And a further expressiveness is achieved by the repetition, in "touch", of the very sound that is short in "done". We may even see the intuitive work of the poet's art in the fact that the same sound which is long in "All" is repeated in a short form in "God" as if to render the latter word capable, in its own terms, of matching the former whose meaning is to be met and coped with by its meaning.

If there is any line in European literature of which I am most reminded, both as regards sound and substance, by this of Sri Aurobindo's, it is Dante's famous

E la sua voluntade è nostra pace.

Sri Aurobindo's line rivals Dante's as well as affines itself to it in what I may call the art no less than the heart. Before I proceed, let me tell you that in Italian the *c* is always *ch* (while *ch* is always *k*) and the *e* is always pronounced when it is an end-vowel, except when it gets merged in another vowel immediately following it. To begin the comparison : there is here also the note of a deeply melodious bell, though now more with *l*'s than with *n*'s, in the opening : "E la sua voluntade". Literally, the whole line may be Englished : "And His Will is our peace." Such a translation has an admirable directness, but the majesty of the original is absent. And absent too is the note we have spoken of. To catch this note as well as something of the polysyllabism which gives the Italian that majesty, a translator has written :

His Will alone is our tranquillity.

An excellent line, this, but a little different in its total effect from Dante's. It has the resonance, yet not the directness of the original. And the sense of cessation of unrest brought by the *s* and *ch* sounds of "nostra pace" is lacking. I think this sense will come out if we write :

His Will alone is our serenity.

Then we shall have three sibilances—those in "His" and "is" and "serenity"—answering to the three related sounds, sibilant or semi-sibilant, of the Italian "sua" and "nostra" and "pace". Going back to Sri Aurobindo's line, I may draw your attention to the fact that my comparison of it with Dante's in the original does not end with the bell-rhythm. The *s* and *ch* of "nostra pace" are also almost exactly present here, though in a reverse order, in "touch" and "is".

So much for the art of the two lines. What about the heart ? I suggest that the same heart is in both, approached and traversed from two opposite sides. In the Dante line we may read a profound faith in the rightness of God no less than in His almightiness—almightiness against which nothing can prevail. Only God's Will is the ultimate determinant, and whatever He wills is right. A full acceptance of His omniscient decisions, a total surrender to His

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omnipotent acts—in short, an utter love which wants nothing except what He in his wisdom and power gives—is the sole road to attaining peace. This means a humility before the afflictions and adversities of life, a resignation to the blows of circumstance, a devotion that never doubts in the midst of doom—because all unpleasant happenings are seen to be the workings of God’s inscrutable hand which nothing can stop and which even through the worst has to be taken as doing the best for us. To illustrate most acutely what is meant, we may look at a stanza from a French poem of the sixteenth century, Malherbe’s celebrated *Consolation à M. du Perrier sur la Mort de sa Fille*. In this stanza, which is the final one, Malherbe, after saying that the rich and the poor alike are subject to the law of Death, *la Mort*, tells the grieving and inconsolable father :

De murmurer contre elle et perdre patience
Il est mal à propos ;
Vouloir ce que dieu veut est la seule science
Qui nous met en repos.

In the last two lines we have Dante’s simplicity of penetrating intuitiveness transposed into a moving clarity typical of French verse at its finest. John Chadwick whom we Aurobindonians know as Arjava has rendered Malherbe most sensitively throughout the poem and especially in the closing verse (where the pronoun “her” in his version refers, of course, to Death) :

Impatient murmurs or embittered turning
Against her, deem not best ;
Save willing the thing God wills, no other learning
Shall bring us to our rest.

The religious quality recommended is a mixture of what Indian Yoga terms *samatā*, *śraddhā* and *bhakti*, a mixture of equanimity, faith and devotion to be practised *vis-à-vis* all occurrences and conditions ; and the result is spiritual calm.

Sri Aurobindo’s line also involves God’s Will, for it speaks of things being done with the help of the God-touch and wherever there is a conscious doing there is will. Here too we have the idea that God’s Will is almighty and that it is the most right force—yes, right, since surely the “All” that can be done is not anything mean or cruel or depraved : Sri Aurobindo is not saying, “You can succeed in being a thorough devil if you call God’s touch to your aid.” The thing which ought to be done, the action which would lead to the true,

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the beautiful, the good, is intended—though not in a conventional sense which shies away from the bold, the grim, the stormy—and we are told that no matter how difficult or impossible-seeming such right action may be, we shall be victorious by having on our side the power of God in even a small measure. But the rightness and the power of God are visioned here primarily not as the establisher of things as they are : they are visioned primarily as the changer of established things. Of course, God is both. He has brought forth an imperfect universe, but only in order to make it perfect. And, since He has brought it forth, even in the most imperfect state of affairs His Will towards perfection must be at work, so that whatever imperfection is present is perfectly in place and carries His Will in itself. The universe therefore is a paradox. It is at the same time God's Will manifest already and a mass of difficulties and darkneses in which this Will has to manifest progressively and create bliss and light. A single truth with two faces is before us and the Dante-line shows one face which has to be seen if we are to achieve spiritual peace and the line of Sri Aurobindo shows the other face which must be seen if we are to transform earth-existence into the Life Divine.

Even Death need not be accepted as an irrevocable decree of God. Just as ignorance in the mind has to be removed, just as misery in the emotional being has to be abolished, just as incapacity in the life-force has to be eradicated, so also death in the physical form has to be conquered. "A tall order," the sceptic may sneer—but to grant that God's perfection awaits to be manifested is logically to imply this extreme triumph, though the triumph can be got only after a colossal travail. An unavoidable part of the instrument for that triumph is "willing the thing God wills" and taking with love the varied operations of the Universal Spirit in its drive through our little likes and dislikes. Then only can we build on a solid foundation—the foundation of a supreme peace—the hope and aspiration and effort of transfiguring the scheme of the universe with the fiat of the Transcendent Spirit that awaits with its archetypes to remould man and evolve even in man's body the Immortal. So we may bring the Aurobindonian idea to some kind of expository focus of relation with the Dantesque by picking up again in verse the theme of Death from Malherbe's poem and writing over against Arjava's translation of his final stanza the following:

Impatient murmur nor embittered turning
Against Death wins escape :
Only the God-touch on man's body burning
Calls forth the immortal shape.

TALKS ON POETRY

(The use, as here, of "nor" in poetry confers the negative on what precedes no less than on what follows. The sense in the above is that we certainly have to start with the Dantesque attitude : we must stand imperturbable, since neither complaint nor resentment can free us from mortality. The sole help lies in receiving the luminous touch of God more and more upon our physical substance and converting the clay-sheath into the concealed divine original of it.)

Now for a few words on the magnificence of that third line from Sri Aurobindo :

I cherish God the Fire, not God the Dream.

I must clear immediately a possible misunderstanding. In the very first Talk I described the poet as, among other things, a dreamer. I meant that the poet looks beyond the actual and thrills to a hidden perfection, to the Transcendent Spirit's veiled archetypes and to the Universal Spirit's secret omnipresent beauty. God the Dream in this sense must never be rejected and should be cherished if God the Fire is to come into play. In fact, the two are fused—and in poetry itself the reverie and the realising rapture are indissoluble. Has not Gerard Manley Hopkins characterised the very activity of the poetic imagination as deriving from this rapture, in that phrase of his ?—

Sweet fire, the sire of Muse...

The Dream against which Sri Aurobindo makes his Savitri pit herself is an indulgence in high visions accepted as wonders that cannot take birth—wonders about which he writes :

Behold this fleeting of light-tasselled shapes,
Aerial raiment of unbodied gods ;
A rapture of things that never can be born...
Cloud satisfies cloud, phantom to longing phantom
Leans sweetly, sweetly is clasped or sweetly chased...

The mysticism which Sri Aurobindo proclaims through Savitri's lips is a dynamic mysticism opposed to lying content with a Divine Perfection shining in some ever-alooft ether, a beautiful but issueless splendour. It holds God to be a power self-effectuating in the world of men, not merely a Light but also a Fire, the Truth that conquers by consuming our imperfections. Nor is the Fire-idea confined to the Power-aspect of God. Dreams such as Savitri abjures have a far-awayness that can never be palpable to the heart. Fire is

the very inhabitant of the heart—nay, it is the heart's own substance. When God is Fire, He is an intense intimacy—a supreme Love close and all-consummating. With His centre in the seat of longing, He becomes a rapture that can radiate forth into the physical world and make it rich with a wide and wonderful communion, a manifold infinite oneness. To approach and call into ourselves and treasure as our delight a Godhead conceived and felt as what Patmore in a magnificent phrase of his own has termed a “crimson-throbbing Glow”—to do this is to make possible God's incarnation in each of us, to do this is to bring the God-touch that can do all and to help God grow up in the midst of the foolish wise men of the world. Thus Sri Aurobindo's magnificence of phrase reveals the pure yet passionate Yoga that is the secret of the irresistible divine potentiality asserted by his felicity of phrase and the ground of the spiritual evolution that his piquancy of phrase prophesies.

We may close with two points about the technique of the line. First, the three parts of the verse—“I cherish/God the Fire,/not God the Dream/”—are held together in a subtle roll of continuity by the occurrence of *r* in each. Secondly, the word “cherish” is most effectively in tune with the positive content of the statement carried by the word “Fire” as distinguished from the negative content in the word “Dream”. For, “cherish” means, according to the Oxford Dictionary, not only to nurse, foster, cling to, hold dear but also to keep warm—and its very sound suggests the peculiar substance and activity of fire: the rich delicacy that is a scorching softness, the childlike quiver that is a rapture-rush.

As a Parsi, I find Sri Aurobindo's magnificent phrase especially appealing. The Parsis are known as Fire-worshippers. Their temples hold God's presence in the symbol of Fire. Day and night, the flames are fed on sandalwood and what burns in every Parsi temple today is a fire lit from the one which the Parsis brought, guarded most loyally, most lovingly, from Iran when the Arabs overran that country and threatened to kill or convert. The faithful few sought refuge in India after toiling across the sea in small boats, cherishing God the Fire. And this beloved glory had come through long ages of sandalwood-sustained force from the great golden presence kindled by the prophet Zarathushtra (Zoroaster to the Greeks) in remote antiquity. The self-same Fire that was set burning thousands of years ago has burned without a moment's cessation right up to this day, thanks on the one side to the zeal of the Zarathushtrians and on the other to the tolerance of the Hindu faith that sees a myriad ways to reach the Divine and finds no way alien to its own essence. And perhaps it is because the Parsis made their home in the midst of India's multi-minded aspiration and realisation that they have developed a receptivity to all kinds of cultures—easily assimilating various values, eastern or western—and that

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some of them have become Aurobindonians as if they were born to be such.

It may be interesting to remember that at two points of history Zarathushtrianism had the possibility of becoming in some form or other the religion of Europe. Darius the Great of Persia invaded Greece and fought her armies at Marathon in the very heart of their country, but suffered a defeat. His son Xerxes led another attack, cut down the heroic Spartans at Thermopylae, conquered Athens itself and offered it to God the Fire, yet with its blaze behind him he met with a check in the naval battle at Salamis and had to retire from Greece. If the tide of war had moved a little differently and Greece had fallen to the Persians, the rest of Europe would have been at their mercy. Then, according to scholars like Max Müller, Zarathushtrianism rather than Judaeo-Christianity would have been the prevailing religion of Europe and also America. Fire-temples would have sprung up where now Churches abound.

Even after the setback to the military and imperial ambition of Xerxes, there arose the prospect of the West turning Zarathushtrian. The old religion in the new garb of Mithraism—the cult of the Iranian Sun-god Mithra akin to the Vedic Mitra—grew a keen rival to early Christianity. Mithraism spread Fire-worship wherever it went. And by its dynamic character it appealed to the Romans. The Roman soldiers took Mithra as their deity and carried his cult to all the countries subjugated by the legionaries. Recently a temple of Mithra was unearthed in the heart of London ! This shows how far and wide was the establishment of Fire-worship at the time when Christianity was struggling for a hold on the minds of men. Mithraism ran neck and neck with the new creed and, if some of the Roman Emperors had not been converted to Christianity and stamped out all other cults, what had remained undone by Darius and Xerxes would still have come to pass.

Would the West have been vastly different as Zarathushtrian rather than Judaeo-Christian ? At least with regard to theology and the ethical code, Dr. Spiegelberg does not think so. He believes that much of Judaeo-Christianity itself is Zarathushtrian in origin. Some points of important affinity are quite clear between the ancient religion of Iran and the Christianity that flourished later. The former, like the latter, believed in a loving Father-God who is omniscient and concerned with His children's welfare. Zarathushtra, though not considered the unique Son of God, was yet God's messenger on earth and, like Jesus, was said to have been born miraculously of a sexless conception. The righteous were asked to look forward to "the Kingdom of God". There was sharp prolonged conflict between God and Satan and there were the regions of Light and Darkness, Heaven and Hell, for the future life of human beings. Angels and demons were ranged on opposite sides. Also, there was to be a final resurrection of the dead similar to what is envisaged in the Christian Bible. The

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general mind of the West in its religious outlook would have been the same as now.

Would poetry have differed greatly ? Shakespeare is little concerned with religion; so he could not have been unShakespearean in the essence of his poetry without Christianity. Dante's *Divine Comedy* would have changed in details but the broad scheme would have remained identical in the spirit of its theology and in its picture of the Hereafter. (The very word *Paradiso* derives from the Persian *Pairidaeza*.) Milton too would have written of the war between God and Satan, angels and devils, though the story of the Garden of Eden might have differed. Goethe also would have thought of his Mephistophilis the Devil tempting Faust.

We are thinking of might-have-beens. As things are, no more than a lakh of people survive to follow in the most literal sense God the Fire. In their own homeland, their glory is as good as extinguished. Well does Omar Khayyam lament with both piquancy and felicity :

They say the Lion and the Lizard keep
The Courts where Jamshyd gloried and drank deep :
And Bahrà'm, that great Hunter — the Wild Ass
Stamps o'er his head, but cannot break his sleep.

The theme of the Fire-worshippers has attracted several English poets. In the hills of Persia they were known in Moslem times as Guebres or Gebirs, and Landor has a long poem on one of them. Moore has versified a story about a Fire-worshipper who was hounded by the fanatics of Allah, and in his poem are words that can apply not only to the Zarathushtrian remnants in Persia but also to the Parsis of India :

Is Iran's pride then gone for ever,
Quenched with the flame in Mithra's caves ?
No—she has sons that never, never
Will stoop to be the Moslem's slaves,
While heaven has light or earth has graves !

But, though Moore says that Iran's surviving sons will never submit to the Moslems, he nowhere puts a bar to their Indianising themselves and surrendering to India's greatest spiritual figure and becoming devotees of the Master who has written the poignant poem called *Bride of the Fire*, the splendid poem named *Bird of Fire*, the book of Vedic translations entitled *Hymns to the Mystic Fire* and put into the mouth of Savitri the magnificence of the line that has fired me to all this heated digression.

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