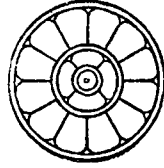


MOTHER INDIA

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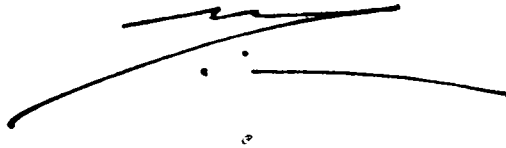


Lord, Thou hast willed, and I execute.

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. 5

"Great is Truth and it shall prevail"

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WORDS OF THE MOTHER

WHENEVER somebody is not just according to the usual pattern, if all the parts and activities in him have not the usual balance, if some faculties are more or less missing and some others are exaggerated, the common and easy habit is to declare him "abnormal" and to have done with him after this hasty condemnation. When this summary judgment is passed by somebody in a position of power, the consequences can be disastrous. Such people ought to know what true compassion is; then they would act differently.

The first necessity is to abstain from thinking of anyone in a depreciatory way. When we meet a person, our criticizing thoughts give to him, so to say, a blow on his nose which naturally creates a revolt in him.

It is our mental formation that acts like a deforming mirror to that person, and then one would become queer even if one were not. Why cannot people remove from their minds the idea that somebody or other is not normal? By what criterion do they judge? Who is really normal? I can tell you that not a single person is normal, because to be normal is to be divine.

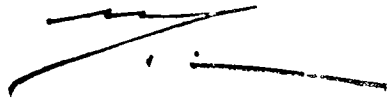
Man has one leg in animality and the other in humanity. At the same time he is a candidate for divinity. His is not a happy condition. The true animals are better off. And they are also more harmonious among themselves. They do not quarrel as human beings do. They do not put on airs, they do not consider some as inferiors and keep them at a distance.

One must have a sympathetic outlook and learn to co-operate with one's fellows, building them up and helping them instead of sneering at whatever seems not up to the mark.

Even if somebody has a deficiency and is hypersensitive and self-willed, you cannot hope to improve him by summary measures of compulsion or expulsion. Do not try to force his ego by your own, by behaving according to the same pattern. Guide him gently and understandingly along the lines of his own nature. See whether you can place him where he can work without coming into conflict with others.

If those who are in power are puffed up with their own importance, they disturb the true working. Whatever their abilities, their achievement is not the real thing.

But it is not that they are always lacking in good-will. They have false ideas of what is proper. If they become more conscious of the divine aim, they can surely succeed in carrying it out.



THE MOTHER ANSWERS A QUESTION

Q. Vous avez demandé aux professeurs "de penser avec des idées au lieu de penser avec des mots". Vous avez aussi dit que vous leur demanderez plus tard de penser avec des expériences. Voudriez-vous donner un éclaircissement sur ces trois modes de penser?

Q. You have asked the professors "to think with ideas instead of with words." You have also said that later on you will ask them to think with experiences. Will you throw some light on these three ways of thinking?

R. Notre maison a une tour très haute; tout en haut de la tour il y a une chambre claire et nue, la dernière avant de surgir à l'air libre, en pleine lumière.

Parfois, lorsque nous en avons le loisir, nous montons jusqu'à cette chambre claire; et là, si nous y restons bien tranquilles, nous recevons la visite d'une ou de plusieurs visiteuses; les unes sont grandes, les autres petites, certaines sont seules, certaines en groupes; toutes sont claires et gracieuses.

Généralement, dans la joie que donne leur arrivée et dans notre hâte de les bien accueillir, nous perdons notre tranquillité et nous descendons au galop pour nous précipiter dans la grande salle qui forme la base de la tour et qui est le magasin des mots. Là, dans une excitation plus ou moins grande, nous choisissons, nous rejetons, nous assemblons, nous combinons, nous dérangeons, nous réarrangeons tous les mots qui sont à notre portée, pour tâcher de reproduire telle ou telle visiteuse qui est venue à nous. Mais, le plus souvent, l'image que nous réussissons à faire d'elle ressemble plus à une caricature qu'à un portrait.

Pourtant, si nous étions plus sages, nous resterions là-haut, au sommet de la tour, bien tranquilles, dans une contemplation joyeuse. Alors nous nous apercevriens qu'au bout d'un certain temps, plus ou moins long, les visiteuses elles-mêmes descendent lentement, gracieusement, calmement, sans rien perdre de leur élégance ou de leur beauté; et en traversant le magasin des mots, sans effort, automatiquement elles se revêtissent des mots nécessaires pour être perceptibles dans la maison matérielle elle-même.

C'est cela que j'appelle penser avec des idées.

Quand ce procédé n'aura plus pour vous de mystère, alors je vous expliquerai ce que c'est que de penser avec des expériences.

THE MOTHER ANSWERS A QUESTION

A. Our house has a very high tower; right on the top of that tower there is a bright and bare room, the last one before we emerge into the open air in full light.

Sometimes when we have leisure, we climb up to this bright room and there, if we remain very quiet, one or more fair visitors call on us; a few of them are tall, a few others small, some single, some in groups; all are bright and graceful.

Generally, in our joy at their arrival and in our haste to welcome them with warmth, we lose our tranquillity and come down at a gallop to rush into the large hall at the base of the tower, which is the store-room of words. Here, somewhat excited, we select, reject, assemble, combine, disarrange, rearrange all the words at our disposal in an attempt to produce a replica of such and such a visitor who has come to us. But most often the picture we succeed in making is more like a caricature than a portrait.

If, however, we were wiser, we would remain up there at the summit of the tower, quite still, in a joyous contemplation. Then we would see that after a certain length of time the visitors themselves descend slowly, gracefully, calmly, without losing in the least their elegance or their beauty and, while crossing the store-room of words, they smoothly and automatically clothe themselves with the necessary words in order to be perceptible even in the material house.

This is what I call thinking with ideas.

When this procedure will no more be a mystery to you, I shall explain what is meant by thinking with experience.

23-26.5.1960



LETTERS OF SRI AUROBINDO

SEX THOUGHTS AND IMPULSES

Q. It is said that if one gets sex thoughts and impulses, one should practise 'nigraha' for some time, so that during this time peace or purity may descend and change the lower habits. What does our Yoga say about 'nigraha'?

SRI AUROBINDO : *Nigraha* means holding down the movement, but a movement merely held down is only suspended—it is better to reject and dismiss, detaching yourself from it. (6-12-1933)

Q. With the peace and silence established in the being, do the sexual suggestions fall off naturally?

SRI AUROBINDO : If it is established *all through*, then it brings purity and the purity throws off the sexual suggestions. (7-2-1934)

Q. Some people get these suggestions in regard to anybody—beauty or character—has nothing to do with them. Is there no rhyme or reason in this matter?

SRI AUROBINDO : None. The sexual impulse is its own reason to itself—it acts for its own satisfaction and does not ask for any reason, for it is instinctive and irrational. (14-3-1934)

Q. Will sex-dreams disturb one's sadhana? And what do they imply?

SRI AUROBINDO : Sex in the subconscious. If it is only in the subconscious, it should not be of much importance. (4-4-1934)

Q. Along with the sex thoughts, there are the egoistic thoughts about the power to attract others through one's physical charms.

SRI AUROBINDO : It is the usual vanity of the lower vital—it is very common. Any man can have an attraction for any woman, and vice versa, when the sex forces are active, but that attraction is not his, it is the pull of the sex force. (12-4-1934)

Q. When one becomes more and more aware of the vital-physical, is sexual sensitivity a necessary stage in the sadhana?

LETTERS OF SRI AUROBINDO

SRI AUROBINDO : No—but since it has come, you have to face it and get rid of the sexuality. (27-4-1934)

Q. Sometimes the physical feels the sex sensation, but it has greatly diminished elsewhere.

SRI AUROBINDO : In order not to have a hold, it must be pushed out from the vital also. Then the physical sensation only touches and passes. (24-7-1934)

Q. The sex thoughts do not seem to come really from within us. Most of them have even no connection with us. They are merely a play of the physical nature without any individuality in them. They pass simply from men to women or the other way round—often without our knowledge.

SRI AUROBINDO : Yes, that is what happens—but sometimes people, if they receive and indulge them, become themselves instruments for passing them on to others. (29-8-1934)

Q. Considering sex as something outside one, could one leave it entirely to the Mother for transformation?

SRI AUROBINDO : Yes—so long as it does not come inside, that can be done. (25-10-1934)

Q. What does “coming inside” mean?

SRI AUROBINDO : Coming inside means taking hold of you so that there is a push for satisfaction. Pressure from outside however strongly felt is not coming inside. (26-10-1934)

Q. After taking the position of witness, one feels strengthened to change it to that of governor in matters of sex.

SRI AUROBINDO : That is good. The Mother is pressing for the sex trouble to go out of the sadhakas—as it is a great obstacle. So it must go. (29-10-1934)

Q. If sex is fought out up to the vital and remains only on the surface of the physical, cannot one have a pure purity?

SRI AUROBINDO : It must be pushed out from the physical also, to have a complete purity of the whole being. The mind and vital can have a pure purity even when it is there on the surface of the physical. (30-10-1934)

MOTHER INDIA

Q. Even when one has hardly any sexual feeling, how does the vital attraction come at times?

SRI AUROBINDO : If there is no sexual feeling or hardly any, that is a great gain. The difficulty then remains only in the vital pull for interchange and in the formative imagination. They have to fade out. (5-12-1934)

Q. Cannot one admire the beauty of women without any special sex attraction?

SRI AUROBINDO : If one admires all beautiful things, not women only, without desire—then there would be no harm. But specially applied to women, it is a relic of the “sex appeal”. (6-12-1934)

Q. Talking with the other sex, one's consciousness does not always have the same ease as with one's own, even though there is no perceptible sex attraction.

SRI AUROBINDO : It is the sense of sex that causes that, even if there is no attraction. One must be able to deal with all without any sense of sex. (8-12-1934)

GUIDANCE FROM SRI AUROBINDO

TALKING

Q : Yesterday my inner condition was disturbed by talking. I well knew I should not be speaking uselessly. What then made me do it ?

SRI AUROBINDO : It is always something in the physical or the outermost vital that does it. (2-4-1934)

Q : My writing comes out more easily through silence than my speech does.

SRI AUROBINDO : Talk is more external than writing, depends more on the physical and its condition. Therefore in most cases it is more difficult to get it out of the clutch of the external mind. (3-10-1934)

Q : To remain concentrated during a talk is very difficult.

SRI AUROBINDO : That is very usual. It is only when the consciousness is very strongly established that it remains while talking. (8-10-1934)

Q : You have said, "But at this stage it is much better to keep yourself separate and look with a certain indifference at the doings of others." I suppose it means not talking also. What is actually meant by the last few words of your statement ?

SRI AUROBINDO : Not to mind what they do or interest yourself or criticise or intervene—but leave all to the Mother. (11-10-1934)

Q : Now it is becoming possible to observe silence during mental pursuits also. But it is rather a slow and tedious process. While talking I have to utter each sentence to myself first and then only express it.

SRI AUROBINDO : Good. But afterwards that process will not be necessary. You will remain in the silence automatically even when speaking. (30-10-1934)

SRI AUROBINDO ON INDIA'S DESTINY

(This editorial, published in the "Karmayogin" of July 3, 1909, was in reply to a criticism that had appeared in the "Bengalee", an influential journal conducted by Surendra Nath Banerji of Bengal and representing "the now declining school of the nineteenth century" to which Sri Aurobindo made a reference in the article published last month in this series. - The critic had apparently questioned the assertion of Sri Aurobindo at Jhalakati (since republished in his "Speeches"): "it is because God has chosen to manifest Himself and has entered into the hearts of His people that we are rising again as a nation." Hence the rejoinder.)

III

OPINION AND COMMENT

THE HIGHEST SYNTHESIS

IN the *Bengalee's* issue of the 29th June there is a very interesting article on Nationalism and Expediency, which seems to us to call for some comment. The object of the article is to modify or water the strong wine of Nationalism by a dash of expediency. Nationalism is a faith, the writer admits ; he even goes much further than we are prepared to go and claims for Nationalism that it is the highest of all syntheses. This is a conclusion we are not prepared to accept : it is, we know, the highest which European thought has arrived at so far as that thought has expressed itself in the actual life and ideals of the average European. In Positivism Europe has attempted to arrive at a higher synthesis, the synthesis of humanity ; and Socialism and philosophical Anarchism, the Anarchism of Tolstoi and Spencer, have even envisaged the application of the higher intellectual synthesis to life.

In India we do not recognise the nation as the highest synthesis to which we can rise. There is a higher synthesis, humanity ; beyond that there is a still higher synthesis, the living, suffering, aspiring world of creatures, the synthesis of Buddhism ; there is a highest of all, the synthesis of God, and that is the Hindu synthesis, the synthesis of Vedanta. With us today Nationalism is our immediate practical faith and gospel not because it is the highest possible synthesis, but because it must be realised in life if we are to have the chance of realising the others. We must live as a nation before we can live in humanity.

It is for this reason that Nationalist thinkers have always urged the necessity for realising our separateness from other nations and living to ourselves for the present, not in order to shut out humanity, but that we may get that individual strength, unity and wholeness which will help us to live as a nation for humanity. A man must be strong and free in himself before he can live usefully for others, so must a nation. But that does not justify us in forgetting the ultimate aim of evolution. God in the nation becomes the realisation of the first moment to us because the nation is the chosen means or condition through which we rise to the higher synthesis, God in humanity, God in all creatures, God in Himself and ourself.

FAITH AND ANALYSIS

Because Nationalism is the highest synthesis, it is more than a mere faith, says the *Bengalee*, it embodies an analysis, however unconscious or even inadequate, of the actual forces and conditions of life. We do not quite understand our contemporary's philosophy. An unconscious analysis is a contradiction in terms. There may be a vague and ill-expressed weighing of things in the rough, but that is not analysis. Analysis is in its nature a deliberate intellectual process ; the other is merely a perception of things separately or together but without analysis. Analysis is not inconsistent with faith, but must accompany it unless the faith is merely superstition. Every faith is to a certain extent rational, it has its own analysis and synthesis by which it seeks to establish itself intellectually ; so has Nationalism. What the *Bengalee* means is apparently that our faith ought not to exceed our observation ; in other words, we ought to calculate forces for and against us and if the favourable forces are weak and the unfavourable strong, we ought to move with caution and hesitation. Now that is a very different question which has nothing to do with the philosophical aspect of Nationalism but with the policy of the moment.

Our position is that Nationalism is our faith, our *Dharma*, and its realisation the duty which lies before the country at the present moment. If so, it is a thing which must be done and from which we cannot turn merely because the forces are against us. If we rely on an analysis of forces, what is it we arrive at ? It was only yesterday that there was a series of articles in the *Bengalee* which sought to establish the proposition that the Hindus on whom the burden of the movement has fallen are a doomed and perishing race. The writer arrived at that conclusion by patient and exhaustive analysis. What else does analysis show us ? It shows us one of the most powerful Governments in the world determined not to part with its absolute control and aided for the present by a large part of one of the chief communities in India. On the other side, a

people unequipped, unorganised, without means or resources, divided within itself, a considerable portion of it inert, and even in the educated class a part of it unsympathetic, afraid, insisting on caution and prudence.

Shall we then turn from our work ? Shall we deny God ? Rationality demands that we should. And if we do not, it is simply because it would be to deny God, because we have "mere" faith, because we believe that God is within us, a spiritual force strong enough to overcome all physical obstacles, weaknesses, disabilities, that God is in the movement, that He is its leader and guides it, that we belong to the world and the future and are not a spent and dying force. This faith we hold because we understand the processes by which He works and can therefore see good in evil, light in the darkness, a preparation for victory in defeat, a new life in the apparent process of disintegration.

MATURE DELIBERATION

That the movement is from God has been apparent in its history. Our contemporary does not believe that God created and leads the movement, he thinks that Sriji Surendra Nath Banerji created it and leads it. Only so can we explain the extraordinary statement, "every step that has been taken in construction has been preceded by mature deliberation." Is this so ? Was the Swadeshi movement preceded by mature deliberation ? Everybody knows that it was scouted by our leaders, and if it had been again proposed to them a month before it suddenly seized the country, would still have been scouted. It came as a flood comes and swept away everybody in its mighty current. Was the Boycott preceded by mature deliberation ? Everybody knows how it came, advocated by obscure mofussil towns, propagated by a Calcutta vernacular newspaper, forced on leaders who shrank from it with misgivings, accepted it with tremors and even then would only have used it for a short time as a means of pressure to get the Partition reversed. Everybody knows how it spread over Bengal with the impetuosity of a cyclone. Was the National Education movement preceded by mature deliberation ? It came suddenly, it came unexpectedly, unwelcome to many and still damned with a half-hearted support by the leaders of the country.

This is what we mean by saying that God is in the movement and leads it. It is a greater than human force, incalculable, sudden and impetuous, which has swept over the country shattering and recreating, transforming cowards into heroes, lovers of ease into martyrs, self-seekers into self-sacrificers, changing in a few years the whole outlook, temper and character of a nation.

(To be continued)

SRI AUROBINDO

THE OLD AND THE NEW

SRI AUROBINDO

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

I FIND that my call to the country, to pull down the prison of the old in order to create the new has given rise to much anger, fear and anxiety in the minds of many. They have got the idea that the old is all propitious; it is the irreproachable prosperous treasure-house containing the riches of perfect truth and integral knowledge and dharma. The very Indianness of India depends on its antiquity.

We who are ready to march on the path of progress with our faith firmly fixed on the Divine and His power, and willing with undaunted courage to create the new forms of the future, are accused of being travellers on a reckless path, drunk with the wine of youth and nourished by Western culture. To make easy the advent of the new by removing the old is, they say, an extremely dangerous path that leads to ruin. If the old is destroyed then what will remain of the eternal religion of India? It is best to cling to the old, that imperishable penchant for liberation, that incomparable and beneficial illusionism, that immobile stability which constitute the sole wealth of India. I could have replied that it was difficult to comprehend or imagine a situation more disastrous, an end more deplorable, than the present condition of India and specially of Bengal. If this is the result of holding fast to the old, then what harm can there be in trying for the new? Which is better, to remain inactive relying on the old or to set out on the free road of an independent life by tearing to bits this net? But many of those who object are learned, thoughtful and honourable men. I have no intention of dismissing their words lightly. On the contrary, let me try to make them understand the significance of our words, the deeper truth of our call.

The eternal and the old are not one and the same thing. The eternal belongs to all time; what is beyond the past, the present and the future, what remains as an unbroken continuity through all changes, what we perceive as the immortal in mortal—that is eternal. We do not call the dharma and the fundamental thought of India, just because they are old, the eternal dharma, the eternal truth. This thought is eternal because it is the self-knowledge obtained by the realisation of the Self, this dharma is eternal because it is based on the eternal knowledge. The old is only a form of the eternal which was suitable to the age.

SRI AUROBINDO AND THE ENGLISH MUSE

I HAVE just read a charming poem by Walter de La Mare, *The Chinese Pot*:

Sunsets a myriad have flamed and faded
Since he who 'threw' this clay upon his wheel
With life-learned skill its hues and colours graded,
And in its furnace did its glaze anneal :
A Chinese, ages distant. Yet how clear—
In all of essence to our minds most dear—
This thing of beauty brings its maker near !

The poet, as everywhere else, has achieved in this delectable piece a combination of deft craftsmanship and imaginative inspiration. The passage of time vividly flashes before our eyes and the vision is reinforced by the assonances and consonances in such breathed fricatives as 'flames' and 'faded' and 'furnace'; the liquid melody also haunts the ear in words like 'clay', 'wheel', 'glaze', 'anneal'. The image of the sunset flaming and fading is charged with associative richness and our imagination roves back by millenniums and we see great heroes, like Alexander, and Caesar, who shone like resplendent suns and then flickered away into the abysm of Time whereas this small clay pot so fragile and tiny has outlasted all their glory and even today spans a bridge over the two wide gulfs of time and space that separate ancient China from the modern English poet. We can thus see the old grizzled face of a Chinese potter designing the pot with a sureness of touch that has a life-time of loving practice behind it.

But an insidious doubt begins to creep into my mind, whether in appreciating the artistry of the poem I am not chasing mere shadows and seeing beauties which do not at all exist in the piece and bearing out what Helena in Shakespeare says :

Things base and vile, holding no quantity,
Love can transpose to form and dignity.
Love looks not with the eyes, but with the mind,...
Nor hath Love's mind of any judgment taste.

Being a foreigner, I should not venture to advance beyond admiring the bare ideas in an English poem even though English critics keep on sounding a note of warning to remind us that a poem is primarily a work of art and not a

neat and flawless exposition of a coherent philosophy ; and we should immerse ourselves in its verbal music, the evocative power of its images and the beauty of its design and its significant rhythms, the harmonious blending and meaningful clashes of consonants and vowels : and yet alas ! a foreigner cannot but be deaf and blind to all this artistry and has to read a poem as the mere exposition of an idea.

I content myself with admiring the idea of the poem, deriving some comfort from Chesterton's witty paradox, "Nothing sublimely artistic has ever arisen out of mere art, any more than anything essentially reasonable has ever risen out of pure reason.... Every great literature has always been allegorical—allegorical of some view of the whole universe. The 'Iliad' is only great because all life is a battle, the 'Odyssey' because all life is a journey, the Book of Job because all life is a riddle." Let us dismiss what he says because a Defence of Nonsense cannot be without a grain of nonsense and return to our Chinese Pot and disengage the central idea of the poem and see what it is worth. But the idea fuddles my wits and I cry in sheer bewilderment, "Holy Moses ! What is he talking about ? Can a decrepit potter, who lived in ancient times somewhere in remote China, by shaping a clay pot communicate to a modern English poet not only his thoughts and feelings but the whole of his complex personality ? whereas a poet's work must remain an undecipherable hieroglyph to a foreigner even though the world seems to be shrinking to a small family in our supersonic age ? Perhaps a Chinese Pot, like the Grecian Urn of Keats, is more eloquent than any verbal expression can ever be ; for, language, as is often said, is given to man to conceal his thoughts. There is the other possibility also: perhaps the Chinese Potter was not at all an artist but a mere pot-boiler and the English poet is revelling in a world of make-believe."

All these doubts and questions have arisen in my mind as a result of an English critic's remark that Sri Aurobindo could not respond to the artistry of English poetry because, "No alien can use the words of another language with the associative richness required by poetry." According to the critic, Sri Aurobindo because of this limitation is unable to appreciate anything except the ideas of the English poets. Much cant nowadays gets talked about the true nature of poetry, and the function of imagery and sound-effects and readers are baffled by the rapidly veering dictates of fashions and one never knows whether "drab passages of contrived vulgarity and cascades of wild, indecent abuse" are the genuine stuff of poetry or are elements that have to be eliminated, so that, as John Press in his *Chequer'd Shade* hopes, "Poetry's essential nature will shine through the medium of a highly concentrated language cleansed from the accretions of prosaic muddiness."

MOTHER INDIA

If Sri Aurobindo remains an alien to the finer elements in English poetry then we are driven to the acceptance of the narrowest racial theories and any hope of mutual understanding between the Asian peoples and the Europeans would seem chimerical.

It is well-known that Sri Aurobindo was sent to England at the tender age of seven and even before that he had spent two years from the age of five to seven in Loretto Convent School at Darjeeling which was mainly intended for children of British officials in India. At home before the school-going age his bringing up was left to the charge of an English nurse.

From the age of seven to twelve he stayed with the Drewetts at Manchester. Rev. Willam Drewett was an accomplished Latin scholar and he took Sri Aurobindo under his wing and with the assistance of his wife coached him for about five years. As Sri Aurobindo was not attending any school, he could devote plenty of time to the study of English poets and also wrote some poems. At that time he thoroughly studied the Bible also.

From 1884 to 1890 he studied at St. Paul's, London; and Dr. Walker, the then Head Master, marked him down as a brilliant student and helped him in acquiring proficiency in Greek. So Sri Aurobindo mastered the two classical languages and secured the Butterworth Prize in Literature and the Bedford Prize in History. Sri Aurobindo also got the scholarship to join King's College, Cambridge. At Cambridge again, he passed the Classical Tripos in first class and was a successful candidate in the I.C.S. Competition which in those days was considered the most difficult examination in the world.

G. W. Prothero, a senior Fellow of King's College, on coming to know that Sri Aurobindo had been disqualified from the service merely because he had failed to appear in the Riding Test, addressed to the Government a letter full of warm understanding of his straitened circumstances, and concluded it with these words: "He performed his part of the bargain, as regards the College, most honourably and took high place in the first class of the classical Tripos. He also obtained certain College prizes showing command of English and literary ability." Prothero further remarks, "Besides his classical scholarship he possessed a knowledge of English literature far beyond the average of undergraduates, and wrote a much better English than most Englishmen."

This is the opinion of an Englishman who could not have occupied without wide erudition the position that was his. In those days Sri Aurobindo himself, in one of his letters to his father, gave an account of his meeting with Oscar Browning of King's College, who invited him to tea. Oscar Browning said to him, "I suppose you know you passed an extraordinarily high examination. I have examined papers at thirteen examinations and I have never during that time seen such excellent papers as yours (meaning classical papers, at the

scholarship examination). As for your essay it was wonderful." The subject for the essay was, as Sri Aurobindo has written, a comparison between Shakespeare and Milton. If after all this evidence English people believe that Sri Aurobindo suffered from the same disabilities as a foreigner ordinarily does, then the problem assumes very large proportions and all the talk by Englishmen about Greek and Latin poetry sounds like meaningless gibberish. How can the modern European scholars claim to penetrate into the deeper associations of the words used by ancient Greek poets? And yet scholar after scholar has been doing it and no one dismissed the whole thing on the ground that foreigners were debarred from appreciating the poetry of another country.

Matthew Arnold has written six pages on the word *Eutrapelia*, showing how its meaning underwent significant changes in the course of eight centuries. The poet Pindar uses it in a disapproving way as an adjective and means by it 'a word or deed, in biblical phrase, of vain lightness, a word or deed such as is not convenient.' A century after, Thucydides uses it, according to Arnold, in the sense of 'a happy and gracious flexibility.' After three centuries Aristotle uses the same word in another sense. Writes Matthew Arnold, "With Aristotle it is one of the virtues; the virtue of him who in this pleasant sort of intercourse, so relished by the Greeks, manages exactly to hit the happy and right mean; the virtue opposed to buffoonery on the one side, and to morose rusticity, or clownishness, on the other." Again four hundred years pass and the word rises in the mind of St. Paul when he writes the Epistle to the Ephesians, and Arnold goes on to say, "*Eutrapelia*, which once stood for that eminently Athenian and Hellenic virtue of happy and gracious flexibility, now conveys this sense no longer, but is ranked, with filthiness and foolish talking, among things which are not convenient." And Arnold traces the meaning given to it in St. Paul's time to its use by Pindar eight hundred years before him. This is the history of the varying use of the words *Eutrapelo*, and *Eutrapelia*. It takes our breath away to see how an Englishman can dive deep into the meanings of words used in the remote past whereas Indians even like Sri Aurobindo have to be imprecise in the use of English words although they have spent the most formative and impressionable years of their life in England living entirely with Englishmen.

Sir C. M. Bowra goes one better in his book *The Greek Experience*. Dealing with the problem of finding English equivalents for such words in Greek as 'good', 'beautiful', 'just', and 'virtue' whose meanings do not coincide with their English versions, he writes, "But once we know how they work, there is no great difficulty in translating them, even if we have to render them differently in different places." It is amazing how Arnold could complain of lack of *Eutrapelia* on the part of Englishmen when they can evince such flexibility in the

handling of Greek words used by the ancients more than two thousand years ago while the Indians well-known for their intellectual suppleness are utterly incapable of enjoying the evocative power of English words even though they are swamped in a spate of journals, reviews literary and cultural, picture magazines of all sorts, talkies and radio programmes and yearly collections of one-act plays, short stories and verse anthologies.

Sir C. M. Bowra further writes about the Greek language, "Another notable characteristic of Greek is its flexibility. There seems to be no topic and no occasion to which it cannot rise with effortless ease and appropriate dignity. As Greek civilization developed and explored new territories of thought, so the language developed, adapted itself to new demands, and found its suitable instruments for them....The Greeks displayed an extraordinary capacity for making *words assume new duties without losing their freshness or their force*.¹ This is all the more remarkable since it meant a complete break with their old mythical and pictorial way of thinking, and it is likely that they reinforced their vocabulary from common actions, habits, and handicrafts by extending the implication of familiar words to unprecedented duties." And it is most significant that without ever having heard a syllable of ancient Greek Sir C. M. Bowra waxes eloquent over its musical qualities. He writes, "Though it is less marmoreal than Latin, it has none the less a majesty which is the more impressive because it has no air of being calculated, but rises naturally from the demands of a mood or a situation. In the full gamut of its sounds, its rich array of vowels, whether pure or diphthongs, and its control of all the chief consonants, it has a far richer tonal variety than English, in which the vowels tend to deteriorate to a dead uniformity and consonants are too often slurred or neglected." He has written many pages on the beauties of the Greek language but here it is enough for my point to demonstrate how English scholars confidently launch into such dangerous waters and yet maintain that English poetry must fail to evoke the right response from Indian readers. If this point is stretched to its logical conclusion then good-bye to all the classical dramas and poetry. Many critics have tried to prove that Shakespeare's plays could have been properly appreciated by the Elizabethan audiences alone who could relish the freshness and nutty flavour of his language; if this is so, Aeschylus, Sophocles and Euripides must be either consigned to the lumber-room or read for their ethical precepts and some rudimentary metaphysics. But what will be the fate of Homer then? Surely when Pope in his *Essay on Criticism* insists on the novitiate in poetry,

¹ Italics mine.

Be Homer's works your study and delight,
Read them by day, and meditate by night,

he means not Homer's ideas but his artistry whether in the whole design of the epic or the beauty of the diction and imagery and the majestic flow of the narrative in all its richness of observation. But again we hear Matthew Arnold in his essay, *The Study of Poetry*, advising the new generation to cultivate assiduously a high taste by the reading of the classics. He writes, "Indeed there can be no more useful help for discovering what poetry belongs to the class of the truly excellent, and can therefore do us most good, than to have always in one's mind lines and expressions of the great masters, and to apply them as a touchstone to other poetry." Then he goes on to quote such lines from Homer and Dante and Shakespeare as can be our touchstones in picking out what is truly noble in other poetry. I shall quote here the lines of Homer which had such a powerful impact on Arnold that they served him as touchstones for all later poetry, and not one of them contains any striking idea. They appeal to us for their imaginative vividness and emotional quality. Take the two lines in which Homer comments on Helen's mention of her two brothers whom she cannot spot among the Grecians :

So said she ; they long since in Earth's soft arms were reposing,
There, in their own dear land, their fatherland, Lacedemon.'

The lines are beautiful, for they make us physically feel the motherly softness of the motherland and thus give flesh and blood to a common sentiment. And then Arnold quotes the three lines in which Zeus addresses the horses of Peleus :

'Ah, unhappy pair, why gave we you to King Peleus, to a mortal ? But ye are without old age, and immortal. Was it that with men born to misery ye might have sorrow ?' (*Iliad*, xvii 443-445.)

And lastly we quote the words of Achilles to Priam, a suppliant before him :

'Nay, and thou too, old man, in former days wast, as we hear, happy.'

Now anybody can see that these lines are not memorable for their ideas but for their concentrated emotional charge. But these are lines of a poet whose whole social environment, ethical values, religious beliefs and practices were far different from modern European civilization. This is the picture of

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ancient Greece that F.L.L. ucas presents us with on the first page of his *Greek Poetry for Everyman* :

Where lowlands stretch for ever,
Rank pasture, mud-banked river
And bullocks flick and browse,
And flies carouse ;

Or the city's smoke-pall thickens
And the sullied sunlight sickens,
There the heart cries 'How far
The mountains are !'

Till, on some windless even,
Vast cloud-peaks rampart Heaven,
And sunset hues with rose
Their timeless snows ;

Above this age's shuffle,
Its buzz, and rush, and scuffle,
So towers, far off, at peace,
The world of Greece.

Thus we are on the horns of a dilemma. Shall we put aside the whole wealth of classical literature—European literature—as an undecipherable hieroglyph ? But then what shall be left of European literature? Shall we not rather enrich our lives by imaginatively recreating its experience through classical literature? Recently the British Council in Madras arranged for some lectures by English critics of English literature. One of the Indian students asked him whether for the full appreciation of Lawrence's novels it would not be necessary to visit Nottinghamshire. The professor replied, "I think we have imagination." If we deeply examine the question of the associations of words we are driven to conclude that every human being has quite different associations clustering round the words he uses. In the same family the word 'father' will evoke different memories and emotions, and communication of ideas or feelings reduces itself to a will-o'-the-wisp and we become the monads of Leibnitz with windows tightly shut. In that case not only the poetry of one country remains incomprehensible for the people of another but for one's own kith and kin, and poetry will be reduced to Empsonianism.

(To be continued)

RAVINDRA KHANNA

BORIS PASTERNAK*

PASTERNAK. His name and his novel *Dr. Zhivago* have leapt to the eyes of the world. This book has won him two things. High appreciation from the world, topped by the Nobel prize; and, as a paradox, stern censure from his own countrymen, those armed with political powers. I am not concerned with the resulting controversy. Something else is my topic. I understand that the word 'Zhivago' is cognate to our *jiva* (a living being or life itself). 'Doctor Zhivago' may be regarded as embodying and illustrating the life-principle of the author himself—the secret of life, as revealed to him. The *raison d'être* of his book is the significance of life and its course as discovered by him.

The first principle, the guiding motto of Pasternak's vision of life is the unity of all life on earth. The march of life has been one and indivisible in all climes and times. The same vibration of life, the same rhythmic movement is at play in the universe. Man, animal and plant—in all there is only one golden thread that runs through. They are moved by the same tune, the same rhythm and the same life-energy. They have a common nature, a common virtue, a common movement and a common goal. The experience of this union is perhaps the fount of an urge towards Supreme Love. If one loses oneself in this cosmic union, then and then alone will come peace, freedom and the *summum bonum* of life, whatever that is :

And life itself is only an instant,
Only the dissolving
Of ourselves in all others
As though in gift to them.

Life loses all its burden, its obligation and becomes almost light as emptiness when we are able to merge and fuse it in the universe.

But behind this conception of the universal life, declaring that "there is no other thing here on earth," there enters a duality with its inner conflict. For individual freedom is the second note of Pasternak's life-principle. No doubt, the whole creation is indivisible, yet it is a close-knit unity in manifold diversity. Seeing in this light, when we focus our attention on the individuality

* Pasternak died on May 30, in his seventieth year.

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of man we come face to face with quite a different picture. Individuality means not only struggle but a veil of darkness as well—the ugly play of all the hungers and passions. Life becomes a chalice of poison. The individual is condemned to dash himself in vain against the collective solidarity of which he is part. And thereupon we begin to perceive that peace, unity, the supreme identity Pasternak has realised do not belong to the land of the mortals. Even if there is anything in his realisation that belongs to this earth, then it must have penetrated it, passed through and gone far beyond to reveal something of another world. This world as a result turns into a great illusion—and then when one can look upon it as such—wonderful to say—it assumes the beauty of a mirage! This beauty therefore can last as long as the world is taken as a whole. But in an individual life the illusion presents an awful sight. In spite of a unity in the creation the individual life is a bundle of sorrows and tragedies of which Christ, his Lord, is the very embodiment. “What do you want to know of the creation which is under the octopus of time and subject to death?” queries the poet :

Sorry that the world is simpler
Than some clever people think,
Sorry for the drooping thicket,
Sorry that each thing has its end.

There are plenty of similar imageries which give the same lesson :

And white as ghosts, the trees
Crowded into the road
As though waving good-bye
To the white night which had seen so much.

What life is with all its weal and woe as well as wants and satisfactions has been beautifully illustrated by the poet in a fable wherein we find the true significance of living :

Once upon a time
In a fairy-tale kingdom,
Spurring over
The burs of the steppe,

A horseman rode to battle.
Through the dust a dark forest
Rose to meet him
In the distance.

Uneasiness
Scratched at his heart :
‘Beware of the water,
Tighten your girth.’

BÖRIS PASTERNAK

He would not listen,
Galloped
Full tilt
Up the wooden slope ;

Followed the channel
Of a dried-up stream,
Passed a meadow
And crossed a hill ;

Strayed into a defile,
Came on the spoor:
Of a wild beast
Leading to water,

And deaf to the sound
Of his own suspicion,
Rode down to the gully
To water his horse.

Over the water,
Across the ford,
The mouth of a cave
Lit up like sulphur.

Crimson smoke
Clouded his vision.
A distant cry
Sounded through the forest.

The rider started ;
In answer to the call,
Picked his way gingerly.
Now he sighted—

And gripped his spear—
The head,
Tail,
Scales of the dragon.

Light scattered
From its blazing mouth.
It had trapped a girl
In three coils of its body.

Its neck was swaying
Over her shoulder
Like the tail of a whip.
The custom of that country

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Alloted a girl,
Beautiful
Prisoner and prey,
To the monster of the forest.

This was the tribute
The people paid
To the serpent, ransom
For hovels.

Free
To savage her
The serpent twisted
About her arms and throat.

The rider raised eyes
And prayer to high heaven,
Poising his lance
For battle

Eyes closed.
Hills. Clouds.
Rivers. Fords.
Years. Centuries.

Knocked down in battle
The rider has lost his helmet.
His faithful horse
Tramples the serpent.

Horse and dead dragon
Are side by side in the sand,
The rider unconscious,
The girl in a daze.

Blue gentleness lights
The vault of noonday.
Who is she ? A queen ?
A peasant ? A princess ?

At times excess of joy
Triples their tears,
At times a dead sleep
Holds them in its power.

At times his health
Comes home to him,
At times he lies motionless,
Weak with loss of blood.

But their hearts are beating.
Now he, now she
Struggles to awake,
Falls back to sleep.

BORIS PASTERNAK

Eyes closed.
Hills. Clouds.
Rivers. Fords.
Years. Centuries.

To the poet the Greek mythological story is not a temporal and spatial occurrence but an everlasting symbol which repeats itself perpetually. The ballad narrates the incomplete and tragic life of man. A youth hastens to save a damsel from the clutch of a python. All the three are either dead or mortally wounded, reeking in blood—perhaps for eternity.

Is there no escape from this pitiful fate of life? With a hardened heart and a muffled voice one has only to say.

Don't cry, don't pucker your swollen lips,
Don't gather them into creases,
For that would crack the dryness
Formed by the spring fever.

Verily life is but a constant whirl of rise and fall—a wheel that moves forward but grinding slow and inflicting wounds.

And yet, the poet says, that is not absolutely indispensable, there is always a choice, a way of escape:

However many rings of pain
The night welds round me,
The opposing pull is stronger,
The passion to break away.

In fact, the figure of Christ is ever present before his vision. Christ himself is his master, the ideal of human life. The love for his Lord Christ has brought him liberation. When the great crisis came and He had to choose did He not too cry out:

Abba, Father, if it be possible,
Let this cup pass from me.

Still He accepted the Dark Night and passed beyond. He was able to see its necessity and its utility. For calamities are blessings in disguise. Indeed,

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they should be looked upon as a special Grace of the Divine. The poet cites a parable of the Bible :

Near by stood a fig tree,
Fruitless, nothing but branches and leaves.
He said to it : 'What joy have I of you ?
Of what profit are you, standing there like a post ?

I thirst and hunger and you are barren,
And meeting you is comfortless as granite.
How untalented you are, and how disappointing !
Such you shall remain till the end of time.'

According to the poet it is the supreme Blessing that is capable of making the impossible possible. Is it not a cruel irony ? No, it is not so. "When our calamities reach their climax, He rushes upon us and covers us up." Therefore it is said that God appears before us not in the broad daylight but at the dead of night like a thief on tiptoe. The virtue of a spiritual man lies in his capacity to see weal in woe. Ordinarily sorrow is taken as an unmixed evil. But in the vision of the poet there are veins of delight concealed in sorrow, and in their discovery lies the secret of life. The poet says :

That is why in early spring
My friends and I gather together
And our evenings are farewells
And our parties are testaments,
So that the secret stream of suffering
May warm the cold of life.

Sorrow is a form of austerity, though not voluntary but imposed. In winter all nature puts on an austere form. Perhaps, it is for this reason that winter is so dear to Pasternak. Of course, the Russian winter is well-known for its special features, and its scenic effects have passed into the stuff of the Russian consciousness. As is the wintry external nature, so is the life of man; from the standpoint of esoteric truth, the world is all fog and mist and is but a shocking barrenness. In such conditions what is to be done ? We must take shelter in the sanctuary of our heart lit up by our self-dedication. God has thus given us a splendid chance for self-concentration. When we are alone, friendless and deserted by everybody God sends us his divine messenger :

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He remembered the majestic mountain
In the wilderness, and that pinnacle
From which Satan tempted him
With world power :

And the wedding feast at Cana,
And the company marvelling at the miracle,
And the sea over which, in the mist,
He had walked to the boat, as on dry land :

And the gathering of the poor in a hovel,
And the descent into the cellar with a candle,
And the candle snuffing out in fright
When the resurrected man stood up.

It seems that the problem of life can be solved only through the two great sayings of Christ. And the life-principle of Pasternak has developed on the basis of these two sublime ideas. The first is :

The kingdom of heaven is within you.

It is in the depths of our heart that the peace, freedom, light and the supreme Love abide. But that does not mean necessarily that our outer life too shall be all peace and freedom from disease and danger. This can neither be expected nor should be wished for. The outer life, the normal life and the movements of nature are naturally a play of duality, disharmony and conflict. And even in normal life there can be a barren winter. We know that Judas betrayed Christ and even his faithful disciple Peter denied him thrice before the cock crowed. And consequently the second motto is :

Render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's.

The calamities of nature cannot be evaded, they have to be bravely faced. One has to march through the stormy and tenebrous night to reach the Light and Peace beyond—the supranatural—as did Sri Radha to meet Sri Krishna.

Beauty can bloom only in and through courage. It is this courage that inspires us to achieve something noble. Calamities should be turned into opportunities. We have to bear them as Christ bore the Cross, ride on them as our Gods ride on the carrier beasts.

NOLINI KANTA GUPTA

(Translated by Chunmoy from the Bengali)

THE FUTURE OF PSYCHOLOGY

(Continued from the May issue)

EXPOSITION : INDIVIDUATION, MENTAL, PSYCHIC AND SPIRITUAL *(Continued)*

THE task of Psychology surpasses the rearrangement of psychological forces and their respective structures in abnormal persons. Being essentially the Science of Man it has to deal not only with human actualities and their problems but with human potencies and imperatives and the possibilities of their actualisation as well. Psychology is, less than any other science, a mere instrument for the satisfaction of intellectual curiosity or humanitarian egoism. It does not derive its value from Psychopathology, Psychotherapy, Parapsychology or any other of its specialised sections. It possesses an intrinsic value of its own whence it derives its formidable responsibility—the responsibility of its function as the appointed leader of human evolution which from now on is no longer material but psychological and spiritual. This function it must adopt, this responsibility it must recognise if the fate of the race and the earth is to be determined.

Fully conscious of this responsibility Sri Aurobindo has undertaken the task of exploring the narrow field of man's actualities and the infinite ranges of his possibilities with the utmost accuracy. The result is a stupendous system of psychological knowledge directly applicable to the everyday life of ordinary man, his problems and difficulties, as well as to the great souls, the leaders of the race and their spiritual and physical functions. It is out of the question to venture into any sort of detailed description of his teaching within the limits of this paper. We therefore shall try to present only some of the most fundamental points in the light of a future Integral Psychology. For this we may start from where we left Jung or rather from where Jung left us—from the problem of individuation.

Sri Aurobindo does not use this term. If we would translate it into his terminology we should most probably arrive at something he calls "psychicisation". This ends in a complete and perfect individuation, a psychic transformation of all elements of human nature and a total integration of the human being. In order to understand this process we may glance at the psychological structure of man. His personality or outer nature consists of his physical

being as manifested in his body, his vital being as manifested in his sensations, instincts, will-impulses, emotions, aesthetic feelings, that which is generally though wrongly called his soul—Sri Aurobindo's term for it is "desire-soul" which he distinguishes most emphatically from the true soul or psychic being of man—and his mental being as manifested in his perceptions and ideas, that which is generally though wrongly called his spirit—Sri Aurobindo uses the term "spirit" and "spiritual" exclusively for realities beyond and above the mental being, realities which in regard to the present state of human consciousness are superconscious. These three parts of his egoic nature are what man normally considers to be himself. Whatever may exist besides these formations, he is conscious of the manifested functions of these three only. Nevertheless man possesses a latent nature of an inner physical, vital and mental being which is his true nature and out of which arises all that manifests at the surface. It is the large subliminal reservoir out of which he receives his thought, image, feeling and motive-power of action. While in one direction it builds up, supplies and maintains the superficial personality, which thus could be conceived as a cross-section of this inner structure, it serves as a receptacle of cosmic forces in the other. It is that which opens the individual to the universal and makes possible for the ego the play of separation and independence. Its consciousness is luminous and by far exceeds the consciousness of the ego. The same holds good in regard to its powers which to ordinary man appear still as supernatural and miraculous. To some extent, however, they are already familiar to us from the proceedings of Parapsychology which is precisely becoming the science of this inner nature of man and its dynamisms. Behind these, in the very depth of man's being, at the centre of his embodied existence dreams his true soul, the person behind all personalities, the self behind the ego, the real Man in us. And it is the consciousness of this inmost psychic entity that has to be awakened and to be brought out to the surface. It has to take the place of the ignorant egoic awareness and become the guide in and of every individual. For it is here that the Divine Presence dwells in man and only by allowing Him to lead our life may we hope to attain to perfection.

Thus psychocisation is the process in the course of which the egoic consciousness is replaced by the psychic consciousness, the egoic intentions by the psychic force, the Divine Will or Grace in each individual, and during which the whole structure of man's inner and outer nature is suffused with and transformed by the bliss of his inmost soul. This language may sound peculiar to scientific ears and may even be considered as inadequate because it seems to imply emotional reactions which have to be strictly excluded from the fields of Science. But Science has still to learn that reality is always beyond our power of speech and that whatever words we may use, they can never be more than an indication

of the truth behind them. Besides this, Reality is not at all rational though Science would very much like it to be so. We may even consider it as irrational, if things above and below human reason may be called thus; and the modes of perceiving it are many, for its aspects are many too. Thus we cannot possibly refrain from using words that might shock the scientific intellect shut in as it is in the narrow limits of its dark cave of ignorance. For to bring out certain aspects of Truth and Reality the abstract terminology of reason has to be abandoned for the sake of the more intimate language of the heart.

The instruments applied in the process of psychicisation are purification, concentration and renunciation, a growing opening to the influence of man's own soul and a surrender more and more complete. This, of course, requires faith, endurance, patience, good-will, sincerity, plasticity, detachment, courage, aspiration, receptivity, a silent mind, a one-pointed will, an equal heart, a healthy body and many other essential qualities which to acquire is far from easy for ordinary man. The result, however, is what we may very well call a perfect man, the real human integer.

Let us look at him for a moment. "The soul-power of Knowledge rises to the highest degree of which the individual nature can be the supporting basis. A free mind of light develops which is open to every kind of revelation, inspiration, intuition, idea, discrimination, thinking synthesis; an enlightened life of the mind grasps at all knowledge with a delight of finding and reception and holding, a spiritual enthusiasm, passion or ecstasy; a power of light full of spiritual force, illumination and working manifests its empire; a bottomless steadiness and illimitable calm upholds all the illumination, movement, action as on some rock of ages, equal, unperturbed, unmoved....The soul-power of will and strength rises to a like largeness and altitude. An absolute calm fearlessness of the free spirit, an infinite dynamic courage which no peril, limitation of possibility, wall of opposing force can deter from pursuing the work or aspiration imposed by the spirit, a high nobility of soul and will untouched by any littleness or baseness and moving with a certain greatness of step to spiritual victory or the success of the God-given work through whatever temporary defeat or obstacle, a spirit never depressed or cast down from faith and confidence in the power that works in the being, are the signs of this perfection. There comes too to fulfilment a large...soul-power of mutuality, a free self spending and spending of gift and possession in the work to be done, lavished for the production, the creation, the achievement, the possession, gain, utilisable return, a skill that observes the law and adapts the relation and keeps the measure, a great taking into oneself from all beings and a free giving out of oneself to all, a divine commerce, a large enjoyment of the mutual delight of life. And finally there comes to perfection the...soul-power of service, the

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universal love that lavishes itself without demand of return, the embrace that takes to itself the body of God in man and works for help and service, the abnegation that is ready to bear the yoke of the Master and make the life a free servitude to Him and under his direction to the claim and need of his creatures, the self-surrender of the whole being to the Master of our being and his work in the world.”

This, western Psychology will admit, is indeed a fine result, perhaps even the best we can hope for. But, it will ask, can it be achieved without integration of the personal unconscious? The personal unconscious corresponds in Sri Aurobindo's teaching roughly speaking to a particular region of man's subliminal or inner lower vital and vital-physical nature, though this sphere is not unconscious at all but is illumined by a subtle consciousness of its own that controls our individual physical and vital functions, as well as to a part of his sub-conscious which is a sort of lower annexe of the subliminal, partially individual, partially universal in formation, a vibration of the cosmic unconscious at the border of man's subliminal consciousness. Being thus part of our nature it will have to be included in the process of psychic transformation. But it is the method that is all-important here. While Jung endangers the balance, and if it is a neurotic balance only, of the waking consciousness by flooding its ignorant helplessness with obscure elements from below which it is not able to observe and to control directly, Integral Psychology starts from an intensive and thoroughly sincere purification concentrating the individual consciousness not upon Nature's refusal, its rejections, sins, suppressions, perversions and failures but upon the luminous godhead in the centre of man's inmost soul, aspiring for an ever more perfect surrender of the whole of his nature to the transforming grace within. Thus it is in the end the psychic force of the individual, directly inspired and guided by the Divine Will that effects a spontaneous individuation not, as in western Psychology, the indirect and therefore blind, weak and, above all, alien will of the psychotherapist. Whatever dark elements have to be dealt with, there can be no cure more safe and effective, more easy and complete than to place them one by one right in the full light of one's own soul and to allow its intense bliss to transform them into parts of a truly holy—or wholly—human nature.

This emphasizing of the light instead of the darkness, of the truth instead of the falsehood and perversion, of the things to come instead of the things past can be said to be the hall-mark of Integral Psychology and certainly one of the most important features that distinguishes it from ordinary Psychology. This, however does not mean that the negative aspect of human nature is “suppressed” or disregarded. It receives its full consideration. But it is not all-important. What is all-important is man's capacity to become divine, to

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outgrow his present state of limitation and imperfection, to outgrow even his human perfection as achieved by the process of integral individuation and to reach that stage of his evolutionary journey that is the supreme consummation of his inmost strife and aspiration for perfection. This stage is the divine perfection of man. To reach it is, of course, no easy thing. In fact it is the most difficult task ever proposed to mankind. But for those who want to satisfy the eternal demand of the Divine in them, the claim for Truth and Peace and Harmony, for Beauty, Strength and Knowledge, for Freedom, Unity and Love, there is no alternative save to become this inmost divinity in them, to bring it out to the surface, to flood Nature with its light and power and to transform the life of man into a life divine. All this can be done on Earth and, indeed, must be done here. For only thus can millions of years of evolutionary struggle and striving, hope and aspiration, faith and good-will, the enormous cosmic labour, find its justification. Therefore the task of Psychology is not accomplished with the psychicisation of man. It has to spiritualise him and to make him divine. For only thus can it successfully play its part as the leading evolutionary science.

This, no doubt, surpasses all psychological imagination of the West which does not even consider it as a possibility. But it is exactly here that Sri Aurobindo steps in with the formidable light and power of his experiences as outlined in the comprehensive system of his Integral Psychology. He has explored the vast regions of the superconscious, has undertaken the most detailed scientific analysis and critical examination of its content, its elements and formations, its qualities, energies and structures, its possibilities, probabilities and imperatives and has shown the shortest, easiest and safest way to the realisation of the supreme ideal. The process of psychicisation is either followed or accompanied by the process of spiritualisation which consists, in the main, of two successive workings. First, a growth of consciousness to the next higher plane of existence— say, from Mind, as the plane above Life and Matter, to Higher Mind or from there to Illumined Mind or from there to the plane of Intuition and Overmind or finally to the highest plane of Supermind or universal Gnosis— and a complete identification with the spiritual consciousness corresponding to the plane mounted. Second, a turning back and pulling up of all elements of one's nature on to the new level of being, their transformation into forces and qualities that correspond to this higher level of existence and a complete integration of all parts of one's being into the new consciousness. This twofold process results at each step in a fully integrated and harmonious individual existence, superior in knowledge, power and love, in self-realisation and self-manifestation, to the same individual existence on the preceding level of consciousness and being. Thus in the end a stage will be reached where the

THE FUTURE OF PSYCHOLOGY

last human imperfections are put off, where knowledge becomes boundless and all-embracing, where power grows self-luminous and infinite, where love reaches the heights of divine intensity and beauty, ecstasy and bliss, and where man stands at last revealed to the world as the perfect manifestation and expression of the Diviné Reality within him.

We must confine ourselves here to this brief description of what may be aptly called the field of future Psychology. For details the reader may be referred to the works of Sri Aurobindo. One thing, however, seems to need special emphasis. It is not something supernatural, mysterious or abnormal that Integral Psychology is aiming at. It is rather an intensification of the normal natural forces at work in the universal process of evolution, a speeding up of the tardy movement of man's growth and perfection and a selection of elements that are most helpful towards this end. What Nature arrives at in the course of millenniums of laborious evolution we want and can arrive at in the course of a single life-time if we avoid her constant repetitions, her detours and digressions, if we know the guiding principles of universal progress and realisation and if we are taught to apply them to our own being. We thus can bring about an evolution of Evolution that will lead us straight towards the goal. This may very well be considered as supernormal in regard to our present norms just as Shakespeare and Einstein would have been considered supernormal by Pithecanthropus a million years ago if he could have contemplated their existence. But only by incessantly and untiringly surpassing the normal for the supernormal can man grow in being, consciousness and delight of being. And only by growing in being, consciousness and delight of being can he hope to overcome himself and to end the eternal quest of his soul for ultimate perfection.

CONCLUSION : THE EVOLUTION OF PSYCHOLOGY

Since his origination, man aims, consciously or unconsciously, towards a varying ideal of perfection. All his activities are, willingly or unwillingly, directed towards this aim. To show him the way many bodies of instinctive, perceptive, ratiocinative and intuitive knowledge have in the course of time come into being and claimed superiority over one another. Most powerful among these vital, mental and spiritual systems of either theoretical or applied or existential Psychology were the different Religions, the systems of Occult Science and of Spiritual Philosophy as well as of Mystic and Spiritual Discipline.

By the end of the last century Europe developed a Science of Mental Psychology, which *via* Education, Art and Literature is gaining in influence upon modern man. It too conceives a representative ideal of human perfection which it tries to realise by a psychological process termed individuation. Man,

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perfected by this process, would be some sort of stabilised ego, governed by an admmissive and keenly interpretative mind and capable of living in relative harmony with himself and the world in which he lives.

In the beginning of the present century Sri Aurobindo developed a system of integral Spiritual Psychology thus continuing the ancient tradition of the East to help mankind in the realisation of its ideal of perfection and, at the same time, providing the new child of Psychology in the West with the appropriate means for its growth and intensification.

The ideal of perfection as realised by Sri Aurobindo and revealed to mankind as the next and last step in the process of human evolution on Earth can and will be realised by two successive or simultaneous processes. One is the process of psychicisation. In the course of this process, man, first, identifies himself with his soul and in it with the Divine Presence, and, secondly, transforms his entire nature and, thirdly, integrates all the elements thus transformed as one harmonious whole into the psychic consciousness of his true self. The other is the process of spiritualisation. In the course of this process man outgrows his mental consciousness for an intuitive, cosmic and, finally, supramental consciousness. Each step in that enfolding and manifesting of his latent possibilities is followed by an immediate transformation and integration of the elements of his nature into the new consciousness realised. Man thus perfected will be the supreme manifestation of the Divine on Earth.

Thus the future of Psychology is essentially spiritual. With the end of the last cultural cycle of human evolution the ancient watchword of Psychology "Know thyself" has changed. From the beginning of the first, the subjective, age of the present cycle, its watchword is "Be thyself". It therefore becomes the most holy duty of every religion as the ritualistic and dogmatic body of an inner psychological knowledge to admit and embrace not, as it is done to-day, Mental Psychology only but most of all Spiritual Psychology as the supreme and most direct means for an active salvation of man. At the same time this system of integral knowledge will be able to give to western Psychology whatever is needed for a true and perfect individuation opening up new vistas for the inquiring and aspiring spirit of man. The psychological goal of the race must be able to receive all elements of religious and scientific manifestations and to unite them harmoniously in a transcending realisation. It is this realisation that will be the aim of future Psychology and as such will determine the direction and course of its development.

(Concluded)

JOBST MÜHLING

BHAKTI BEN SHAH

ASHRAM EXHIBITION OF PAINTINGS, MAY 28—JUNE 1, 1960

HERE in the Ashram we have had the privilege, rather rare these days, of seeing the first public exhibition of paintings by an artist who re-captures, in a remarkable way, something of the true spirit of traditional Indian art. Modern Indian artists are often able to give us only the conventions and stylizations of the ancient tradition, which they mistake for its real nature and its inner essence. Often we find figures draped, arranged and employed conventionally, but entirely failing to breathe forth their inner consciousness to the beholder. We are not given a chance to feel their being, to penetrate to their deeper self. The identity with the soul quality of the subject, so characteristic of true Indian art, is lacking, and we have usually a merely facile reproduction of old forms and attitudes, often cleverly and strikingly executed, but nevertheless only shells with little inner content.

The paintings of Miss Bhakti Ben Shah of Bombay give us a welcome change from this current tendency and convince us that the modern artist has not lost all touch with his own heritage.

Of the fifty paintings on display, some twenty-five studies on human and animal life strike us primarily by their power of conveying the inner mood, the state of mind, what we might even call the 'level of consciousness'. In *Krishna's Flute* we actually feel that the Gopis can hear their divine master's music though they cannot see him as we can, sitting at the bottom of the picture. Their faces convey a charming and unmistakable vibration of rapt listening. Similarly in *Identity*, a large portrait of two women carrying water pitchers, the essential being emanates from the faces so strongly that one is almost at a loss to understand how it has been done. We know these women, we are indeed they, immediately and without cogitation.

In all the human-group studies, Miss Shah displays a very fine sense of composition and design. The figures are rhythmically distributed, colourfully soaring and descending, and by their vivacious buoyancy lift the observer up as well. Interestingly enough, the movement of the figures is not conveyed, as in the western technique, by the realistic portrayal of the body with the various limbs and muscles flexed, but rather in the non-realistic Indian method of stylizing the body, showing only its outlines, but conveying movement through

the swing of the drapery and the rhythmic placement of figures. The interlocking figure designs are very reminiscent of temple-friezes; indeed *Rasa*, a line of ladies hand-to-hand, seems like a modern abstractionist treatment of an old theme.

On the subject of the body it should be mentioned here that too often modern Indian artists, lacking in training and technique, taking false refuge behind the canon of the eastern tradition that the outer, natural, realistic representation of the body is not wanted, completely distort and desecrate the human body. The hands are like blobs of clay and the heads sit on grotesque and unnatural shoulders. Far from making the observer travel from the exterior to the inner being, these bodies have the effect of making him doubly aware of what seems to be a false and ugly vehicle. In this collection, however, the figures are harmonious and graceful, stylized in the traditional way and completely satisfying.

In addition to the very strong feeling for line, rhythm and design generally, there is also a very marked awareness of all-over patterns which form the background of many of the life studies. Space is utilized often in floral motifs typical of ceiling and wall panels in North Indian architecture.

The artist's talents are very well balanced, for she exhibits also a rare and discriminating sense of colour. Her use of one brilliant colour as a main 'key' and various tones and shades of the same hue, though not original, is very effective and beautiful. Her brilliant colours are not the pure primary colours—that is, she uses very effectively off-reds, off-blues and so on, with remarkable verve, subtlety and variation.

Miss Shah's animal studies are perhaps the most noteworthy in the whole collection. Apart from the careful composition of moving figures and the great wealth of intricate detail, we receive very markedly a particular stamp of consciousness from each animal-type. Camel, elephant, fish, deer—we feel we know each one better after seeing it with Miss Shah. The essence of the animal comes to us through their eyes rather than their bodies which are conventionalized and muralized, so to speak. *Gold and Grey*, a study of deer, is enchanting in its tenderness and delicacy. Also remarkably good in its total impact is *Angels*, a study of blue Angel fish. In some of these animal paintings, one gets a hint of the old Japanese technique of capturing the subtle aesthesis of the life-force by a mere stroke of the brush. In its own right, the Japanese technique is perhaps more subtle than the Indian which depends more on solid line, but the Indian has a weightiness by which the deep things in us are touched and stirred. The Japanese, with its use of space to leave to our imagination what is not said, conveys more beautifully the changefulness, the intransience of Nature and her eternal movement. The Indian technique on the other hand gives us a sense of the permanent, of the realities which

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persist behind varying form and diverse motion. The Japanese technique brings us to Miss Shah's landscapes which are not of so consistently high a calibre as the life studies. They are a rather mixed batch, but two or three deserve mention : *Stream in Monsoon* gives us a dreamy movement of the play of light and shade on slow waters, and misty mystical *Monsoon Serenity* and *Landscape* (Mahabaleshwara) remind us of the Chinese Sung landscapes.

It is evident that the artist's fullest powers are expressed in her studies of people and animals, where exuberance, rhythm and brilliance can be brought into their fullest play.

As our readers will be interested to know, Miss Bhakti Ben Shah is an Art teacher in Bombay, currently working in four different institutions. At the Chittra Sudha, conducted in the Bhulabhai Memorial Institution, she runs an Art Hobby-class on Saturdays and Sundays, for enthusiasts of all ages. At the Handicrafts Training College, she has some 50 or 60 pupils, among whom are scholarship students from all parts of India and the Andaman Islands. She gives them a general course in crafts which includes aesthetics, design and colour schemes. At the J.B. Petit School, a Parsi girls' high school, she teaches painting three hours a week. It was she who designed their Art classroom, down to the very furniture. At the Balika Vidya Mandir, a Marvari girls' school, she teaches painting and design twice a week.

This very full schedule does not prevent her from pursuing her own creative work at home, although sometimes she can only squeeze in an hour or two between duties. Nevertheless, for each picture that she does, a unique and special kind of inspiration comes into her which lasts until that particular work is complete. Referring to *Identity*, size about 5ft. by 2 1/2,ft. Miss Shah says : "The inspirational feeling came to me each time I sat down to work, although I sometimes had only one hour at my disposal. Yet the inspiration lasted for four months until the painting was finished."

Bhakti Ben Shah graduated from the Sir J.J. School of Art in Bombay in 1946. After this, she made several visits to the Ashram and in 1953 had an opportunity for a few words with the Mother.

"I asked the Mother about the unmanifested realms of art. She replied that among other things, aspiration and perseverance were necessary in order to penetrate and enter those planes." Bhakti Ben continued : "I felt that after the 1953 visit, something concrete was established in my consciousness and something higher was established in my art."

Before 1953, getting adequate teaching work in Bombay had been a rather difficult matter, and Bhakti Ben had one small job. But after 1953, she was offered many positions and was able to make a full-time career of teaching. She was even offered a bungalow in Bombay to use as an art studio by a woman

BHAKTI BEN SHAH

who had seen her book *Ranga Rekhavali*, a short illustrated treatise on designs for floor decorations.

Being a city-dweller has not prevented Bhakti Ben from observing animal-life and acquiring the deep understanding of them portrayed in the exhibit. "All my animal studies were made from sketches. Once I followed a visiting circus, and made about 200 sketches of the elephants before doing the paintings. My human studies, though, were done mostly from my imagination."

What are her views on teaching art to children ? Bhakti Ben believes that as far as possible the youngsters should have free scope, and be free from adult interference in subject matter, in colour and in conception. She feels that the child should be allowed free hand-movements also. As long as the teacher can stimulate his imagination, he should not be allowed to copy. If, however, he is completely at a loss, the teacher can stimulate him by showing him others' paintings.

She feels that in the course of their work, the pupils can be introduced to various styles of art : the Ancient Indian, the Chinese and Japanese, the Modern Abstract, etc. She finds with her own pupils that after five or six years they have a good general idea of these broad types and, having assimilated them sufficiently, even exhibit them in their own work.

She believes that technique in art can best be taught even to older students in the course of their work, without holding any special lessons for it. In this way the students enjoy themselves fully, never feeling art lessons as a drudgery.

Young children, she finds, are creative and daring, often attempting what an experienced artist hesitates to try. If their freedom is not hampered, they can receive inspiration and can inspire the teacher as well.

Bhakti Ben Shah the teacher feels herself also the child, and identifies herself with the child in *Eternal Love*, a sombre and deeply moving portrait of a mother's profound and tender love poured out to a pure and open child. When asked if this painting conveyed the human maternal love, she said, "It is more than that. When I returned to Bombay from the Ashram, I painted this. It is how I felt about my relationship with the Mother."¹

BEVERLEY SIEGERMAN

¹ On the last day of her visit, Bhakti Ben Shah made an offering of some of her paintings to the Mother. (*Editor*)

ON THE STAIRWAY OF THOUGHT

MIND once played a solitary part
In the silence immobile I am within—
The Buddhist dream of a compassionate heart
Would dim the white radiance where Love's thoughts begin.
But Love now speaks these words and Love alone
Treads the high stairway of progressive Thought
And gives real substance to a grander tone—
'This, mind can never learn, as mind is taught,
But must allow, surrender to that calm
Authority within : the psychic Rose
Unfurling petals with a secret charm,
The hidden wonder of a god that grows
Here in the green gardens of eternity,
Here in this human personality.

NORMAN DOWSETT

SOLITUDE

ALONE I sit, Self-poised, the heart content
Rests on a calm isle mid tumultuous seas,
Alone I breathe cool zephyrs heaven-sent,
Bask in a plenitude of peace and ease.

I drink a secret wine that coursing sends
Its potent magic through my torpid veins,
A surging strength my faltering weakness mends
And raptured mind forgets all previous pain.

Invading silence conquers querulous time,
An august Presence makes all things remote,
Their brazen insistence can no more unchime,
On vision's edge they merely hovering float.

Where now are all the things that moved my heart,
The coloured toys I played with for a day ?
Where now ambition's goad and envy's dart,
My brittle dreams, and pleasures fond and fey ?

All these I see now as a shadow-show,
A pointless drama meant but to amuse,
I smile while softened memories quietly flow,
And ponder life's quaint game of mask and ruse.

A carnival throng goes dancing past my seat,
I wait alone, my heart bound to Your feet...

GODFREY

THUS SANG MY SOUL

(26)

VII. MOTHERING THE BOND OF LOVE : PRAYERS AND PRAISES

(Continued)

ALONE THOU ART

MAKE my surrender unto Thee complete,
 May slightest touch, most meagre gift from Thee,
 Mean for my love a whole infinity;
Make my heart kiss the summits of Thy Feet.

O never let one moment's life be lost
 For all that is not in Thy service spent,
 Never my being's smallest stir be bent
Except to burn surrender's holocaust.

Let no attachment nor one hankering haunt
 The madness of my heaven-aspiring heart;
 May all my depths blaze-cry : "Alone Thou art
The eternal idol of my spirit's chant."

(To be continued)

HAR KRISHAN SINGH

THOUGHTS

WHAT is the difference between other Gurus and Sri Aurobindo ?

The difference is the same as between the different momentums with which a leaden ball drops from the roof of the house or from the top of Everest or from the high heaven where dwells the Sun and penetrates into the heart of the earth.

The glance of every Guru bores a deep hole in the gross earthiness of the disciple. But no Guru can penetrate like Sri Aurobindo.

This you have to verify by your own experience.

*

*

I am writing this on the completion of 52 years of my life. In this span of 52 years my mental, my vital and my physical nature have been incessantly at work and the number of things done mechanically perhaps exceeds 52 million and in ironic contrast to this I cannot vouch for even 15 actions which I performed in all freedom.

But I can never forget the first free action on my part when this lower mechanical nature came to a standstill for a moment.

It happened thus. With my uplifted gaze I invoked ardently the Supreme Divine who is Sachchidananda to help me in establishing His luminous nature in the blind helplessly driven lower nature.

GIRDHARLAL

(From the Gujarati of the author's "Uparāma")

SRI AUROBINDO ASHRAM

(Continued from the May issue)

ASHRAM FESTIVALS

IN the vast field of human activities ceremonial functions have their own place. It is not easy to lead a monotonous life. When man gets tired of following his routine work, he wishes to breathe an air free from anxiety and worry. He desires to do something which would fill his whole being with exhilaration and happiness.

It would be difficult to say precisely when in the cultural history of man the idea of fairs and festivities took birth. Maybe, the habit of holding collective festivals is as old as man himself. Maybe, it was initiated by the changing charms of Nature—the deep dark weeping nights of the rainy season succeeded by the blessings of the Autumn moon; the cold dewy nights of winter giving place to the sweet honeyed ones of Spring. Such changes are bound to intoxicate the human mind and man must give vent to his heart's joy by welcoming each change of season with music, dance and drama. With the march of civilization such practices must have been fixed into festivals.

Hence, in every country of the world, festivals are celebrated in one form or another. They are of great importance, if not imperative, as fresheners of the grown-up mind and as fosterers of the young. They are valuable also to the spiritual life.

In the year 1933-34, besides the Darshan Days and the 1st January, no anniversaries were celebrated in the Ashram except four other days on which the Mother gave her general blessings with the leaves of a plant named "New Birth" by her or with other flowers of a special significance. These four days were the 29th March, the day of the Mother's first arrival in Pondicherry (1914); the 4th April, the day of Sri Aurobindo's first arrival (1910); the 25th December, the day of the re-birth of Light; and the 6th January, the Festival of Epiphany.

Though the celebration of the New Year's Day was free from outer show, the solemnity with which the auspicious advent of the Year was celebrated in Sri Aurobindo Ashram was a sight worth seeing. For us, the Ashramites, the greatest celebration of the festival is the opportunity of receiving the golden smile of the Mother.

When the Old Year had given its gifts, good and bad, and was about to bid farewell and the New Year stood on the threshold—at that juncture the sadhaks used to assemble in the Ashram and as soon as the clock struck midnight the Mother welcomed the New Year with her music on the organ. This was followed by pranams in the stillness of the night and the Mother blessed everyone by placing her hand on his head. That pranam was a uniquely solemn experience. For a few years it took place in the meditation hall on the first floor, the Mother facing the south—the same hall where she now sits on Darshan Day facing the east. She used to sit in the centre of the hall with a dim red light to her left. Thereafter it was in the small room at the top of the staircase. We passed before her one by one, did our pranams and received her blessings. The last of these midnight pranams was on the 31st December 1937. From the 1st January 1939 this pranam began to take place in the morning in the same small room. The midnight silence was replaced by the Mother's "Bonne Année" which we reciprocated. She also wrote "Bonne Année" in the books of departmental reports.

Prior to 1939 the Mother used to distribute new clothes to the employees of the Ashram as also to hundreds of outsiders connected with the Ashram, *e.g.*, peons of banks and other institutions.

The distribution of clothes to employees still continues but is now done through departmental heads on the Divali Day.

Most of the Mother's time is taken up with distribution. She keeps giving things in one form and another, as if it were for giving alone that she has descended upon this earth. One is reminded of Tagore's words :

With the arrival of Anandamayi
The whole country is overflowing with Delight.

Every New Year's Day brings a new impetus for human progress. It invites us to do something new. We always looked to the Mother with anxious eyes as to what were the potentialities of the New Year ; and she responded by giving a short special message for it. She has kept up this practice. Every one of us waits eagerly to have a glimpse of the gifts which the coming year has in store. In course of time she began to give messages on other important days also, but they relate more to the pursuit of the Sadhana and the fulfilment of the great object which Sri Aurobindo set before himself. After his passing away the New Year's message used to be given at the Playground the previous evening, in English as well as in French. The next day everyone who went to the Mother for "Prosperity" received a calendar with the message

printed on it. Many townspeople join the Ashramites for the New Year's Blessings and the calendar. This Year, 2,500 calendars were printed of which 1,854 were distributed by the Mother herself, which meant continuous work from 1.45 to 3.30 p.m. The queue started from the Bakery, entered by the side-gate of the Ashram and made a large circle inside the Ashram around the Samadhi before going up to the Mother. After receiving her blessings one made one's exit by the main gate.

The Mother now gives messages on so many occasions that it is difficult to imagine the excitement her first messages caused. Each was an invocation accompanying her music on the organ. A copy of it was given to Datta, and other attendants of the Mother would copy it out for themselves. Once the word went round that the Mother would read out her message. Everyone went to the Ashram at the appointed hour, leaving his normal work, excepting of course a few who could not do so without a relief.

In those days no general importance was attached in the Ashram to any religious festival. Only a few Sadhaks used to go to offer their special pranams to the Mother on the morning of Dassera, Divali and other auspicious days.

Once a newly arrived Sadhika from Calcutta felt the lack of festivities in the Ashram on such a great day as the Ashtami of Durga Puja. She meticulously decorated with flowers the staircase leading up to Sri Aurobindo's rooms. Her enthusiasm has earned for all of us the regular blessings of the Mother on this and other ceremonial days, *e.g.*, Lakshmi Puja, Kali Puja, etc. At sunset the Mother would appear at the landing of her staircase. A year or two later she started coming down and the floor around her chair was decorated with coloured designs (called *alpana* in Bengali). The lights of the pranam hall dazzled one's eyes. Such blessings still continue with this difference that the hour is now changed from sunset to 10 a.m.¹

Similar are the circumstances which led to the celebration of the Christmas Festival, observed here as the rebirth of Light. When there were only about a dozen children in the Ashram, an English Sadhika would invite them to her residence, entertain them and give them some toys. In those days the Mother used to appear on the roof-terrace of the Ashram between 11 and 12 in the morning. The excited children, merrily singing and dancing, would go for her darshan with their red, blue or green paper caps on. As their number increased the festival began to be observed at the Playground in the traditional

¹ Whenever the Mother comes down to give her General Blessings, the passage from the Samadhi to the Meditation Hall, and especially the interior of this Hall and the space round the Mother's Throne, are decorated with ferns, branches and pots with various flowers according to the season—sunflowers in summer, lotuses in the rains, the "Victory" flowers on the *Vijaya Dashami* Day.

way with a Xmas tree decorated by the children themselves. Sometimes balloons used to be flown from the roofs. The Mother used to distribute cakes and toys in plastic bags to the young and the old alike. Since 1953 a few bags have in them diaries with the words of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother on each page. For the last two years the Sadhika who initiated this festival has been distributing the plastic bags. Last year it was celebrated at the Theatre, where soft drinks manufactured by the Ashram soda fountain were given to everyone.

An American gentleman named Fairfield, who had heard about Sri Aurobindo in California, happened to be here during the Xmas of 1953. He was interested in athletics and the various systems of Indian dancing and gave such a skilful performance of the Tandava-nritya that we were all spell-bound.

Of all the Ashram festivals the anniversary of the School occupies the most prominent place. The aim is the integral development of children, to give them enough scope and opportunity to develop their faculties by dance, music, dialogue, orchestra, drama and dramatic postures (mudras). Here these activities are based on the principle of the Master's own words on the subject: "Art stills the emotions and teaches them the delight of a restrained and limited satisfaction.—Music deepens the emotions and harmonises them with each other. Between them music, art and poetry are a perfect education for the soul; they make and keep its movements purified, self-controlled, deep and harmonious. These, therefore, are agents which cannot profitably be neglected by humanity on its onward march or degraded to the mere satisfaction of sensuous pleasures which will disintegrate rather than build the character. They are, when properly used, great educating, edifying and civilising forces."

Prior to 1956 the Ashram had no auditorium of its own. On the anniversary of the school a temporary stage used to be raised at the playground for the performance of the drama produced for the occasion. The stage used to be artistically decorated with pots of ferns and flowers, bright footlights and coloured sidelights against a background of canvas-scenery.

Government officials and prominent citizens used to be invited for the show. In 1954 when the number of visitors was much greater than before, a gallery with seating arrangements for 800 spectators was put up at the playground. That year the special attraction was *Le Grand Secret* written by the Mother. The whole programme, including recitations, dances, etc., lasted for seven hours!

After our Cottage Industry section had been organised, refreshments prepared there with considerable care and expense were distributed during the interval to the Ashramites and guests—one day salty titbits and the next day sweets.

In 1956 the Mother purchased a large plot of land, situated at a little distance from the sea. Working day and night we built there for the year's

annual celebrations a permanent stage complete with its green-rooms, galleries and projection-room, as also a well-lit auditorium fitted with microphones and having a seating capacity for 1,500 persons. The first performance at the new theatre was *The Ascent to the Truth* for which the artists of the Ashram had to prepare eight back-drops. The theatre now constitutes an important part of the Centre of Education. Besides the theatre the plot contains an extensive courtyard, where the March Past was held on the Mother's 80th Birthday.

The Mother used to be present at the rehearsals as well as at the performances up to the 15th anniversary, *i.e.*, December 1958, when Sri Aurobindo's *Vasavadutta* was enacted. This play was directed by Madame Varvara Pitoeff, who is now known as Shrimayi.

Since 1957 the number of visitors has been so great that it is found necessary to repeat the performance specially for the invited guests. When artists from other places give their performances, they are staged at the new Ashram Theatre, as was done in November 1958 when a troupe from the Suramandir and Dancing School of Calcutta came to the Ashram to stage Tagore's dance drama *Chitrangada*. Similarly in 1959 the Prachyavani Mandir of Calcutta gave performances of three different Sanskrit plays at the Theatre to packed houses.

The anniversary of the School is celebrated on the 1st of December by dance, drama, etc., and on the 2nd of December by a display of physical activities which used to be held at the Playground up to December 1955, since when it is held at the Sports Ground. Some of the items are performances on the Roman Ring, the Pole, the Malkhamb, the Pommel Horse, the Vaulting Box, various drills, weight-lifting and yogic asanas. Pictures of some of these asanas were published in the American Magazine *Life*, as well as in English and German Journals. In 1956 as a result of the visit of the Soviet Gymnasts, who had given some training to our aspirants, some new items were introduced, *viz.*, the uneven parallel bars, the balancing beam and free standing exercises. In the same year the Trampoline was also imported from the U.S.A., the performances on which are spectacular. In 1957 the novelties were the Archer's Drill and the Swedish Drill.¹

The programme of the 2nd of December begins in the afternoon at about 4-30 p.m. and lasts for three to four hours, for which elaborate lighting arrangements are made at the Sports Ground. It begins with the March Past and Salute to the Mother. Each group has now its own standard, which is lowered before the Mother as the group marches past. Then *Bande Mataram* is played by the J.S.A.S.A. band. The next item is a welcome to the guests. This is

¹ One year we were entertained to a Fancy Fair.

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followed by the Mass Drill, for which arrangements are made a year in advance. The groups are reorganised with effect from the 1st January 1960 and each group practises its mass drill for the next 2nd December under its own captain once a week at the playground. After the Mass Drill other items are performed and the programme closes with a farewell to the Guests and *Jana-gana-mana* played by the J.S.A.S.A. band.

Since December 1954 the Mother has been awarding the Prix d'Honneur to the student who has shown during the year the best conduct and proficiency in education, both academic and physical.

NARAYANPRASAD

(Translated by J. N. Welingkar from the Hindi)

Students' Section

RÉPONSES—ANSWERS

Q. Douce Mère, comment distinguer entre le bon et le mauvais dans un rêve

Q. Sweet Mother, how is one to distinguish between the good and the bad in a dream?

R. En principe, pour juger des activités du sommeil la même capacité de discernement est nécessaire que pour juger des activités de veille.

Mais comme l'on donne généralement le nom de "rêve" à un nombre considérable d'activités qui diffèrent totalement les unes des autres, le premier point est d'apprendre à distinguer entre ces diverses activités, c'est-à-dire à reconnaître quelle est la partie de l'être qui "rêve", dans quel domaine on "rêve" et quelle est la nature de cette activité. Dans ses lettres, Sri Aurobindo a donné des explications et des descriptions très complètes et très détaillées de toutes les activités du sommeil. La lecture de ces lettres est une bonne introduction à l'étude de ce sujet et à son application pratique.

A. In principle, in order to judge the activities of sleep the same capacity of discrimination is necessary as for judging the activities of wakefulness.

But as one gives generally the name of "dream" to a considerable number of activities that differ totally from one another, the first point is to learn to distinguish among these diverse activities—that is to say, recognise what part of the being it is that "dreams", in what domain one "dreams" and what is the nature of this activity. In his letters, Sri Aurobindo has given complete explanations and descriptions of all the activities of sleep. The reading of these letters is a good introduction to the study of this subject and to its practical application.

2-II-1959

THE MOTHER

Q. Douce Mère, comment est-ce qu'on doit lire tes livres, et les livres de Sri Aurobindo, pour qu'ils entrent dans notre conscience au lieu de les comprendre seulement par le mental?

Q. Sweet Mother, how should one read your books and the books of Sri Aurobindo so that they might enter into our consciousness instead of being understood only by the mind?

R. Lire mes livres n'est pas très difficile parce qu'ils sont écrits dans le langage le plus simple, presque le langage parlé. Pour en tirer profit, il suffit de les lire avec attention et concentration et une attitude de bonne volonté intérieure avec le désir de recevoir et de vivre ce qui est enseigné.

Lire ce que Sri Aurobindo écrit est plus difficile parce que l'expression est hautement intellectuelle et le langage est beaucoup plus littéraire et philosophique. Le cerveau a besoin d'une préparation pour pouvoir vraiment comprendre et généralement cette préparation prend du temps, à moins qu'on ne soit spécialement doué avec une faculté intuitive innée.

En tout cas, je conseille toujours, de lire *peu* à la fois, en gardant le mental aussi tranquille que l'on peut, sans faire des efforts pour comprendre, mais en gardant la tête aussi silencieuse que possible, et en laissant *entrer profondément la force* contenue dans ce que l'on lit. Cette force reçue dans le calme et le silence fera son œuvre de lumière et créera, au besoin, dans le cerveau les cellules nécessaires à la compréhension. Ainsi, quand on relit la même chose quelques mois après on s'aperçoit que la pensée exprimée est devenue beaucoup plus claire et proche, et même parfois tout à fait familière.

Il est préférable de lire régulièrement, un peu tous les jours, et à heure fixe si possible ; cela facilite la réceptivité cérébrale.

A. To read my books is not difficult because they are written in the simplest language, almost the spoken language. To draw profit from them, it is enough to read with attention and concentration and an attitude of inner good-will with the desire to receive and to live what is taught.

To read what Sri Aurobindo writes is more difficult because the expression is highly intellectual and the language is much more literary and philosophic. The brain needs a preparation to be able truly to understand and generally a preparation takes time, unless one is specially gifted with an innate intuitive faculty.

In any case, I advise always to read *a little* at a time, keeping the mind as tranquil as one can, without making an effort to understand, but keeping the head as silent as possible, and letting the *force contained in what one reads enter deep within*. This force received in the calm and the silence will do its work of light and, if needed, will create in the brain the necessary cells for the understanding. Thus, when one re-reads the same thing some months later, one

RÉPONSES—ANSWERS

perceives that the thought expressed has become much more clear and close, and even sometimes altogether familiar.

It is preferable to read regularly, a little every day, and at a fixed hour if possible; this facilitates the brain-receptivity.

2-11-1959

THE MOTHER

Q. Douce Mère, pourquoi la méditation devant tes photos différentes donne une expérience différente ?

Q. Sweet Mother, why does the meditation before different photos of yours give different experiences ?

R. C'est parce que chaque photo représente un différent aspect, parfois même une différente personnalité de mon être ; et en se concentrant sur la photo on entre en relation avec cet aspect spécial ou cette personnalité différente qu'elle a saisie et dont elle porte en elle-même la représentation.

La photo est une présence réelle et concrète, mais fragmentaire et limitée.

A. It is because each photo represents a different aspect, sometimes even a different personality of my being; and by concentrating on the photo one enters into relation with this special aspect or this different personality which it has seized and of which it bears in itself the representation.

The photo is a presence real and concrete, but fragmentary and limited.

4-11-1959

THE MOTHER

Q. Douce Mère, pourquoi la photo est-elle une présence fragmentaire et limitée ?

Q. Sweet Mother, why is the photo a presence fragmentary and limited ?

R. Parce que la photo ne prend que l'image d'un moment, d'un instant de l'apparence d'une personne et de ce que cette apparence peut révéler d'une condition psychologique fugitive et d'un état d'âme fragmentaire. Même si la photographie est prise dans les meilleures conditions possibles à un moment exceptionnel et particulièrement expressif, elle ne peut, en aucune façon, reproduire toute la personnalité.

A. Because the photo catches only the image of a moment, an instant of a person's appearance and of what this appearance can reveal of a passing psycho-

logical condition and of a fragmentary state of soul. Even if the photograph is taken in the best possible conditions at a moment exceptional and particularly expressive, it cannot in any way reproduce the whole personality.

5-II-1959

THE MOTHER

Q. Douce Mère, qu'est-ce que c'est exactement—le subconscient et l'inconscient ?

Q. Sweet Mother, what exactly are the subconscient and the inconscient ?

R. L'inconscient est cette partie de la Nature qui est si obscure et si endormie qu'elle semble être complètement dépourvue de conscience, en tout cas, comme dans la pierre, le règne minéral, la conscience y est totalement inactive et cachée. L'histoire de la terre commence avec cette inconscience.

Nous la portons aussi en nous, dans la substance de notre corps, puisque la substance de notre corps est identique à celle de la terre.

Mais par l'évolution, la conscience endormie et cachée s'éveille peu à peu à travers les règnes végétal et animal, et en eux commence la subconscience qui aboutit, avec l'apparition du mental dans l'homme, à la conscience. Cette conscience aussi est progressive et à mesure que l'homme évolue, elle se changera en supraconscience.

Nous portons donc en nous-mêmes aussi la subconscience qui nous rattache à l'animal, et la supraconscience qui est notre espoir et notre assurance de réalisation future.

A. The inconscient is that part of Nature which is so obscure and so asleep that it seems to be completely deprived of consciousness; in any case, as in the stone, the mineral kingdom, the consciousness here is inactive and hidden. The history of the earth begins with this inconscience.

We carry it also in us, in the substance of our body, since the substance of our body is identical with that of the earth.

But by evolution the sleeping and hidden consciousness awakes little by little through the vegetable and animal kingdoms, and in them begins the subconscience which, with the appearance of the mind in man, reaches up into consciousness. This consciousness also is progressive and, to the extent to which man evolves, it changes into superconscience.

We carry, therefore, in ourselves also the subconscience which joins us to the animal, and the superconscience which is our hope and our assurance of future realisation.

7-II-1959

THE MOTHER

RÉPONSES—ANSWERS

Q. Douce Mère, qu'est-ce que c'est que la Supranature ?

Q. Sweet Mother, what is Supernature ?

R. La supranature est la Nature supérieure à la Nature matérielle ou physique, ce que l'on appelle généralement "la Nature". Mais cette nature que nous voyons, sentons et étudions, cette nature qui est notre environnement familier depuis notre naissance sur la terre, n'est pas la seule. Il y a une nature vitale, une nature mentale, et ainsi de suite. C'est cela qui, pour la conscience ordinaire, est la Supranature.

Très souvent le mot Nature est employé en synonyme de Prakriti, la force exécutive de Purusha. Mais pour répondre de façon plus précise, il faudrait avoir le contexte pour savoir à quelle occasion. Sri Aurobindo a parlé de la Surnature.

A. Supernature is the Nature superior to material and physical Nature, what one generally calls "Nature". But this Nature which we see, feel and study, this Nature which is our familiar environment since our birth on the earth, is not the only one. There is a vital Nature, a mental Nature, and so on. It is this that, for the ordinary consciousness, is Supernature.

Very often the word "Nature" is used as a synonym for Prakriti, the executive force of Purusha. But to answer in a more precise way, it is necessary to have the context in order to know on what occasion Sri Aurobindo has spoken of Supernature.

15-12-1959

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 SEVENTEEN

WE were speaking of musical poetry of two kinds—lyric melopoeia and epic melopoeia. My mind now goes back to a reference I once made to musical words—like “coal-scuttle”, according to a Russian, and “dyspepsia”, according to myself. In the Sabrina-lyric we have quite a number of such words : the very name “Sabrina”, then “translucent”, “amber-dropping”, “lillies” and “silver”. But what the subject of musical words particularly suggests to me this morning is a word matching my old choice of “dyspepsia”. The new word is “lumbago”.

You know what “lumbago” means ? The dictionary gives it as “rheumatic pain in the lower back and loins.” The loins are the region between the false ribs and the hips. Get the word “loins” correctly : don’t be like a friend of mine who always referred to his “loins” when he meant his “loins”—just as some people speak of quotations from Sri Aurobindo published in the Ashram Dairy when they mean Diary. Here perhaps the terms are imaginatively interchangeable not because our Dairy-chief Surendra is in any way responsible for the milk-white pages with the quotations at their heads, but because about Sri Aurobindo we can say in Coleridge’s language :

For he on honey-dew hath fed
And drunk the milk of paradise.

The paradisal milk runs in all of Sri Aurobindo’s utterances—they may be said to stream from a Divine Dairy where Vedic cows are luminously fluent under the super-vision of a Surya-Surendra !

To return to "lumbago". Well, this morning I knew its meaning not quietly from any dictionary but growled out from my own lower back by my "lions." Yes, I have a touch of this rheumatic pain. But that does not spoil my pleasure in the name of the painful complaint. "Lumbago"—what harmonious power is there ! "Dyspepsia" may be considered lyric melopoeia—"lumbago" is surely melopoeia in epic form. And, I may add, the way to deal with it must also be epic. We must face it like heroes—but, in a spiritual Ashram, we have to be heroes of the inner being and use mind-force, if not soul-force. I shall tell you how I am going to make history by my battle with this hellish visitor whose sound entitles it to be almost a compeer of Satan. Satan is also known as Lucifer. Lucifer and Lumbago could very well be twin Archangels fallen from on high.

The history I shall make in dealing with this fiend will be in three dramatic stages. First, there will be a realisation of the full presence of the dread torturer—full presence summed up by my thundering out the name as it is : "Lumbago !" Next, you will see me tackling the demon and sending him away by a mantric strategy of the resisting will. I shall shout : "Lumba, go !" The last stage will find me quite relieved, a conqueror wearing a reminiscent smile and whispering with a sense of far-away unhappiness the almost fairy-tale expression : "Lumb, ago !"

Talking of musical words, I should perhaps remark that a word which out-dyspepsias and out-lumbagoes everything is "Melopoeia" itself. Now, this word—but no ! let me not digress, let me take it only as a musical warning and come back to the point where we stopped last time.

We were with Milton. Milton excels in both lyric and epic melopoeias ; and, in either, he exploits to the full what I may term an earthly delicacy or richness : the moods he turns to music belong, for all their imaginative quality, to the outer mind sovereignly inspired and he has complete grasp over the things he visualises : practically nowhere do we feel that he is in the midst of elusive presences—presences, of course, that are no less concrete for being elusive but that leave our outer mind incapable of entering masterfully into the mood musicalised. It is quite different with Shelley. In him we get a more ærial than earthly melopoeia, either a quiet or a breathless intensity of it, luminous but rarefied. The quiet intensity we catch in a stanza like :

Though the sound overpowers,
 Sing again, with thy dear voice revealing
 A tone
 Of some world far from ours,
 Where music and moonlight and feeling
 Are one.

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Here we have melopoeia about melopoeia itself—song-making about singing, but, though an actual woman is the singer, the voice heard by the poet is not of the earth, and his own verse is also shot with an inner rhythm. Often the sign of Shelley's inwardness is the sense he conveys of a light that merges many realities into oneness. Even when he is not ostensibly referring to some world far from ours, even when he talks of this very world he is aware of such a light. Let me quote a few lines in which he is singing of an earth-scene :

When the night is left behind
In the deep East dun and blind,
And the blue noon is over us,
And the multitudinous
Billows murmur at our feet,
Where all earth and heaven meet,
And all things seem only one
In the universal sun...

This is breathless rather than quiet intensity of melopoeia, but the luminosity and rarefication of tone are the same, and the feeling of a radiant oneness—sun-washed instead of moon-bathed—is present. At the end of this passage, just as at the end of the other, the aerial music begins to be more recognisably of a kind which may be designated as Intonation or Incantation. Intonation or Incantation is a rhythm which does not arise so much from the words heard as from an echo they make in a mysterious dimension of our being. It has been created in the poet as if his eyes were turned inward and fixed on some occult or spiritual presence and then with the light of it on his consciousness his breath brings forth in sound the thrill of that light, making his words throw a spell on the hearer and plunge him to his own being's secret places. No doubt, all poetry has an inward-drawing force, but there is a mood and a rhythm that have it in a special degree and render poetic lines spell-binding. Those last two verses—

And all things seem only one
In the universal sun—

evoke, however faintly, however vaguely, the immensity of a Sun-self of the universe, as it were, and set it making its own subtle all-harmonising sound. The inner music here is a rushing lyricism helped out by the predominantly trochaic metre, just as the inner music of the previous quotation which grows

a spell-binder in the last four lines which waft towards us from some divine distance was a dancing lyricism aided by the predominance of anapaests.

In both we have a sort of unpremeditated art, a simple direct spontaneity. There is a different art possible, a more conscious and deliberate craftsmanship, but it can be equally spontaneous. This may look like a paradox to those who think that spontaneity means something which comes in a single spurt and at the very first push. Budding poets are often indignant when they are criticised; they exclaim: "But it came like that! I did not manufacture it slowly. It poured out in an inspiration." Alas, this business of inspiration is much misunderstood. A poem, of course, is a failure unless it is inspired, a flow of sparkling spontaneity. But spontaneity means no more than that a poem has not been constructed but created and carries the language and rhythm of a hidden power beyond the labouring brain. Provided this language and this rhythm have been caught, it does not matter a whit whether a poem was written at one shot or after days and days, whether it came out easily or after much sweating. The sole important thing is to get the inner stuff. Even work of the outer mind such as Milton's is poetic precisely by the inner stuff, and it differs from Shelleyan poetry not by its lacking that stuff but merely by its getting it translated accurately into terms of the outer mind rather than appearing with some hues and harmonies of its own—and Milton's work is at times even greater than Shelley's despite the outer mind because of this mind's accuracy in translating the inner stuff instead of mixing, as Shelley occasionally does, the inner hues and harmonies with thin echoes of them in the external intelligence. Moreover, the inner stuff itself has either a simple direct look or an art-laden aspect, and the kind that seems unpremeditated may manifest after effort by the poet and the kind that seems deliberately set forth may burst without a moment's thought. There are wheels within wheels in the poetic movement: spontaneity is to be measured only by the authentic touch in the finished product, not by the mode in which the product was finished or by the kind of product the finishing gives us.

Even the art-laden spontaneity is not of one type: it can itself be simple in attitude and motion or be "many-splendoured" and sinuous. The quality of being art-laden is felt in a certain selectiveness, so to speak, of turn and structure: that is all. Intonation more art-laden than Shelley's, yet still simple in attitude and motion, meets us in Walter de la Mare's lyric, *All that's Past*, opening:

Very old are the woods;
 And the buds that break
 Out of the briar's boughs
 When March winds wake,

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So old with their beauty are—
Oh no man knows
Through what wild centuries
Roves back the rose.

The incantatory tone is unmistakable. Long vowels repeating themselves, especially the *o*'s in the second half, and the recurrence of the deep spondee are the main outer instruments of the spell. But really it is a profound delicacy of feeling that makes its own haunting music from inside, carrying our imagination into some depth of the past so that life becomes not a matter of a few years but a secret continuity ageless with an eternal beauty—and the sense of this beauty takes on vividness through the mention of the rose, the time-honoured symbol of the ideally beautiful. De la Mare is not quite mystical here : he is only mysterious, and the natural rose is just dimly touched by the supernatural, but the exquisite intonation creates the spell as of a sacred chant; and the music gets charged, if not exactly with spiritual presences, at least with strange emanations of them.

To receive the full melopoeia of such verse we must read the lines in a special manner. I know that English poetry is not to be sung but spoken, yet a subtle chanting is not the same thing as sing-song and unless we indulge in it a little we do injustice to the special inspiration here. Most Englishmen would fight shy of the subtle chanting I suggest. Their external being is somewhat ashamed to be caught poetising. They have a matter-of-fact clipped way of speech on their common occasions and all poetic expression irks them as being rather dramatic. The Englishman as a type tends to be inarticulate in his day-to-day nature. When he becomes articulate, it is only by going to the opposite extreme and exploding into immortal poetry. Between the two extremes there seems to be not much connection. Hence when he recites poetry he feels it to be something foreign to his normal being. He almost blushes to bring out the imaginative and rhythmic rapture, he tries to pass off the highly expressive abnormality as if it were commonplace. I once heard a British Consul in Pondicherry read poetry to me and Arjava (John Chadwick) during a visit by us to him. Knowing we were poets he thought politeness required him to read a poem from a book so that we might feel interested. Oh it was a terrible experience for me ! He adopted a most businesslike look and flung out the wonderful words like a shower of stones at us. I don't know how I survived the pelting—or how he survived my indignant horror. Of course, all Englishmen are not so self-conscious about reading poetry : I am referring to the average person in whom the Teutonic element from the composite English being is on top. My fellow-poet in the Ashram, Norman Dowsett,

is not so inhibited in this matter—maybe because the element on top in Dowsett is really Norman !

More even than de la Mare, W.B. Yeats in his early phase calls for a bit of chanting tone. There are two phases of Yeats. The later shows him a poet of the athletic intelligence and will, he is taut and powerful and deals with ideas though the ideas have always an occult or mystical background and his rhythm is invariably subtle. The earlier phase brings us a poet washed in the occult or mystical, steeped in strange mythological moods, coloured through and through with the vague depths of what is called the Celtic Twilight, the magic and mystery that were the past of the Celtic element in the complex English psychology, the element still openly at play in Wales and Ireland. Yeats the Irishman is unforgettably wistful and idealistic with Celticism in his early work and brings intonation almost everywhere. More mystically open than in de la Mare is the sense of eternal beauty communicated to us by the Yeatsian incantation in the two well-known stanzas knit together by a single rhyme-scheme :

All things uncomely and broken, all things worn out and old,
 The cry of a child by the wayside, the creak of a lumbering car,
 The heavy steps of the ploughman, splashing the wintry mould,
 Are wronging your image that blossoms a rose in the deeps of my heart.

The wrong of unshapely things is a wrong too great to be told ;
 I hunger to build them anew and sit on a green knoll apart,
 With the earth and the sky and the water, re-made, like a casket of gold
 For my dreams of your image that blossoms a rose in the deeps of my heart.

Here the rose is clearly a mystical symbol. The poet is addressing his beloved, but the love in which he holds her is cored with the sense of some Perfection that is the ideal to which all outer things should conform. This marvellous inner reality, this flower of flawlessness rooted in a depth of dream and adoration, is hurt by the varied cruelty, incompetence and carelessness marking so many processes of time. A child should be happy and at home, a cart should roll smoothly over the snows without violating their virgin expanse ; but what does the poet find ? The child is homeless, cruelly left in the open on the road along which a cart incompetently built, or kept, is trundling with harsh noises and a ploughman carelessly goes thumping with his hard boots the soft whiteness of winter and sending it shattered and scattered to all sides. The blissful and the beautiful, the harmonious and the whole, the considerate and the sensitive—these are the world-vision that love longs for, in tune with the

Ideality to which it awakens at the sight of the sweetheart. A Divine Presence glows within, an unwithering Rose whose eternity all time-movements should reflect instead of obscuring or betraying as again and again they now do. The pain of the obscuration or betrayal is untellable because what is obscured or betrayed is the Supreme whose loveliness is ineffable. With the lustre and colour of this loveliness kindled in the poet by the face of the beloved that seems at once a reverie and a reality, he cannot rest until he wins the power to re-fashion the world into a thing of richest light, "a casket of gold" which would serve as a fit shrine surrounding and enfolding with a divine earth and sky and water this reverie-reality where the human and the divine are blended.

The inner delight and the outer anguish felt by the idealist who wants to shape the things of time into a likeness of eternity have both been caught up by the poet into the poignant grace of a perfect lyric, the casket of a golden word-music. The Presence aglow within him is set alive for us by the peculiar artistry of the poem. Yeats breathes that Presence out to us in a stream of simple or opulent intonation filling the audible words with the inaudible rhythms of a mystical feeling.

But those rhythms will fail to go completely home to us unless our voice attends to the vowelisation and the consonance with a special modulation of tone answering to the inner idea-turn and theme-suggestion. Yeats himself always read his own verse with something of a chant. I am sure he avoided the sing-song monotony which goes ill with English poetry ; but, aware of the profundities whose echoes he was attempting to catch in his word-music, he sought to carry it as near as possible to the effect that sheer music of the wordless variety has the privilege of producing—the immediate feeling of the soul's silence listening to its own eternal secrets.

I shall close with a brief account of how Yeats composed his work. It will serve to illustrate several points made in the course of our talk. Strange as it may seem, many poems of his were first written out in prose-form. As soon as he got a poetic stir in his being he put down on paper all the thoughts that the stir brought up in his mind. When he had got the several implications set out in any prose that came to him, he began to transpose them into poetry. The transposition was to be no mere metricising or beautifying of the prose-matter. A total re-creation had to be achieved. The earth and the sky and the water of common language were to be "re-made, like a casket of gold" before the true poetic harmony could emerge. Entering, beyond the surface-suggestions, into the depths of the ideas he had set forth, he would quicken up his imagination, bring out emotion-charged phrases, roll them on his tongue, keep humming them as he paced to and fro, sit down again and again as if "on a green knoll apart" and beat out on his knees the mysterious rhythms

TALKS ON POETRY

that were unfolding their wings within him. Often there would be a dead stop. The creative impulse would submerge itself. The poet would labour and fail, put aside the unfinished work and wait for a more auspicious occasion. Bit by bit the wonder would grow under his hand.

This was quite opposed to the process by which his friend AE wrote his poems. To AE the poetic inspiration came in a straight flow from the recesses of his being, recesses he had visited in his trances. AE may have found it difficult to understand how Yeats could produce faultless poetry, astonishingly lyrical and spontaneous, with so much labour. Yeats, on the other hand, disbelieved in any inspiration bringing to birth as by a divine afflatus a perfect piece of poetry. The layman would expect AE to have done the greater work under the compulsion of an uninterrupted impulse from inside. But actually Yeats is a greater poet, even greater as a creative force despite the apparent constructiveness of his method of composition. Both AE and Yeats had perfect results to offer at the end of their poetic experience—results unimpeachable in spontaneity. But Yeats was more aware of the poetic possibilities of language, more responsive to the turns of rhythm as enrichers of substance, more varied in his musical moods to embody the diversity of dream-silences. He stands supreme among modern English poets and is the master *par excellence* among them of incantatory melopoeia. In poetry written in English, though not necessarily in England, he is surpassed in this *genre* by Sri Aurobindo alone.

AMAL KIRAN
(K. D. SETHNA)

THE MOTHER*

VI

FOUR puissances are the sovereign of the world
Across whose cosmic norms She acts divine,
The Mother of unseen omnipotence.
They are Her heart's immense creative beats,
Her living hands to build, to raise and shape,
Her enormous feet to trample or to wake.
Across their breasts She guides Her infinite moods,
Her imperishable stroke or lucid charm.
Labouring veiled behind the ego's screen,
Toiling multitudinous across all Time,
Enraptured, dire, marvellous or free,
Tireless, splendid with great unsleeping eyes,
She is unique, the amazing Peak of God.
Not trance alone of an all-witnessing core
Is She upon her summits of golden calm,
But too She is the violent ire and force
To break the adamant seal no fate could break.
Nor only Power is her secrecy's whole,
She is the Consciousness of hidden ways
Whose feet are above the obscure tangles of sense.
Little can we seize of Her sweetness and Her breath,
Little can we know of Her most wondrous Grace.

In the Transcendence She stands sole, supreme—
In the Universal, flings her arms in space—
In the Individual, bears the cross of human fate.
A primal power is She absolute above ;
Nearer to soil Her presence is a gleam
Intimate, clear, ravishing, articulate.

* A versification of the substance of Chapter 6 of *The Mother* by Sri Aurobindo.

THE MOTHER

Two-fold Her consciousness like a two-fold wave—
The Ishwara of endless enraptured trance,
The burning Ishwari of eternal strides.
When She unveils Her boundless countenance,
The pride of Death is a stupendous nought.

Save her resolve, the decree of omnipotence,
Nothing can here or elsewhere exist
Within her wing the Impulses of the Sun.
Tireless She works through Nature at each pause.
Majestic She stands on the kingdom of the gods.
Many the powers and personalities
She sends down to the earth to act divine,
To fight with the foes, victory to gain and reign.
Emanations are they called, these powers superb.
Time out of mind, through aeons the human souls
In these emanations under different names
Have invoked the Mother Divine without a second.
The events of the world-play have been as if
A drama pre-arranged and staged before.
Since the Mother is for all, all things are She,
Even the perpetrations of ignorance vast.
Her love for her children is a measureless sea,
To raise their fate She braves tremendous blows
Of Falsehood, tortures wild of naked Night.
Four mighty manifesting names has She—
Beloved Maheshwari, Mahakali,
Mahalakshmi, Mahasaraswati.

“MADAL”

SHANKARA AND RAMANUJA

(At a recent Quarterly Test in our Education Centre, a question was set in a paper on Indian Civilisation : "Must we accept either Shankara or Ramanuja? Is any reconciliation possible between their respective viewpoints?" The latter part of the question, which had not been discussed in class, evoked some interesting answers, extracts from which are reproduced below with a few slight verbal alterations. The students belong to the Second Year of the Higher Course.)

(I)

SHANKARA and Ramanuja both base themselves on the Upanishads and the Brahma Sutra, both are Vedantic in character, and yet they reach diametrically opposite viewpoints and conclusions.

Shankara follows the path of Knowledge in his spiritual endeavour, and his philosophy begins from genuine experience. He experienced, when he went beyond the Mind, that the phenomenal world was empty of reality, it was a mere shadow of the only true Reality, the absolute immutable Brahman. Shankara does not seek farther, he stops at this experience and seeks to justify it with his extremely powerful logic...

There were many to whom this doctrine of Mayavada seemed utterly wrong, and they sought to refute him. Among these the most prominent were the Vaishnava thinkers of the South. They worshipped Vishnu and they followed the path of Bhakti, of love and devotion. Their highest ideal was *prapatti*, self-surrender in the sea of love for the Lord. To them, the world was very real, it was the creation of Vishnu, who was moreover a personal God, *saguna*, possessor of all good qualities, not a *nirguna* Absolute. The staunchest opponent that Shankara found in this school was Ramanuja...

A reconciliation of the paths of Knowledge and Devotion, as well as the path of desireless Action in the world, has actually been given in the Gita. The Gita says that the world is an emanation from the Highest Reality, the *Purushottama*, who stands above the individual *purusha*. His Power is the *parā* or the Higher *prakṛiti*, not *Avidya*. That lower *prakṛiti*, *Avidya* or *Maya*, acts in the world and is watched by the unenlightened *purusha*. Thus for the Gita, the world is a Delusion, not an Illusion. It is through the knowledge of the *Purushottama*, which can be had by *nishkāma karma*, desireless action in

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the world, done for the Divine in a state of complete surrender to His Will, that one can surmount this Delusion and become Reality. Here we see the three paths merging into one.

. What the Gita simply hints at, is made into a grand synthesis, all-embracing and wide, in the philosophy of Sri Aurobindo. Sri Aurobindo himself says that he takes his stand on the Vedanta, he believes in the absolute *Paramātmān* or Brahman as the creator of the world. The Ishwara has a Shakti, who works in the world. This power is there even in the smallest elements of matter, though it is covered with Inconscience. Man too has his share of dark Inconscience, but he has the capacity of self-exceeding. If he goes a little way, and glimpses the absolute Brahman, that alone seems the true Reality and all the rest is a shadow. But if he seeks deeper, or higher, he sees that that Reality pervades and inheres in all Existence; it is the true soul of things. Man can not only know his soul, but become it, become his true Self. For that, his sincerity, aspiration, faith in the Divine and surrender to His Will are essential. Finally, he will attain the highest Reality, who is *Sachchidananda*—Existence, Consciousness, Bliss—in whom both Shankara and Ramanuja will find their culmination. That is in the sphere of the Supermind, with the light of which he can transform himself and transform the world.

JHUMUR

(2)

We see then that both Shankara and Ramanuja proceeded on their own paths, but neither went to the complete and true Reality, each saw only one aspect of it. Shankara had the experience of the Immutable Self; he did not wait to pass beyond the experience but hastened to philosophise it on logical grounds. To him therefore the world appeared as Maya. Ramanuja on the other hand proceeded on more subjective lines. He reached a Self which is more personal, tangible to the human intellect. But he created a gulf between the Jiva and the Brahman. The reconciliation is to be found in the real and highest Self.

There is one Supreme Being—the Lord of all Existence, who is both Impersonal and Personal; His very existence is Sachchidananda. He is existent in the mind and beyond it also. It is He who is at work in the world. He creates the world and the souls in it—that is his Lila. This creation goes through a process of involution and evolution. There is in the Supreme Reality a Power, a creative Force, inherent—that is the Divine Maya. It is in its origin one with the Existent, it is but the dynamic aspect of Him.

But the created souls when at the mental level do not understand the real Maya. Through the mental veil they see the world as a dream-play, an illusion. As the Lila proceeds, the souls evolve and the true significance, the true self

of Maya is revealed to them. Numerous are the paths leading to this revelation. Shankara took the path of Knowledge, Ramanuja the path of Bhakti. But in order to reach the complete Truth, one has to unite both the paths, make a *samanvaya*, a synthesis. One has to go through the intellect in order to pass beyond it accompanied with faith and Bhakti. It can then be realised that Brahman is in all and all is in Him—there is no gulf to be bridged. The gulf is but the misinterpretation of the mental consciousness.

SUMITA

(3)

We see that Ramanuja and Shankara seem to oppose each other. Are they in fact so contradictory that no synthesis is possible? According to what Sri Aurobindo tells us, what Shankara says is true but is only a partial, incomplete truth; what Ramanuja says is equally true but is not the whole truth. We would reconcile them both in the light of Sri Aurobindo's own experience. Speaking of his experience of Nirvana, he says that at first he felt a vast silence, an inactive unmoving Reality bearing a world where all forms and movements seemed to be empty, mere shadows, without any truth or meaning in them. This is what Shankara seems to have experienced. But then, Sri Aurobindo continues, there was another realisation which merged with the first one and he saw that around all the forms, above them and within them, was the Reality. Then how can we, in view of this vaster experience, accept as final what Shankara tells us or Ramanuja either?

We can perhaps say that the Supreme Divine Reality is at once the Kshara (the Mutable) and the Akshara (the Immutable). Ramanuja experienced the Kshara, and Shankara the Akshara. Therefore Shankara and Ramanuja are both true and can be reconciled in Sri Aurobindo, who insists that the Divine Reality, the Supreme Being, the Consciousness is at once the Infinite and the Finite, the One and the Many, the Immutable and the Mutable, the Unqualified and the Qualified, the Absolute and the Relative. By the Infinite we should understand, as Sri Aurobindo says, not the featureless but the One with infinite potentialities; the Infinite can therefore also be the finite. By the Unqualified is meant not the qualityless but the One having the capacity to have all qualities without being limited by them. So the Brahman of the Upanishads is both the Nirguna of Shankara and the Saguna of Ramanuja, he is both Absolute and Relative, the One without a second and the Reality of the Many. In Sri Aurobindo then Ramanuja and Shankara are reconciled most effectively and truly.

SUDHA

GAMES AND SPORTS IN YOGA

WE are here for yoga, Integral Yoga, as it is known to all of us. The word yoga generally signifies a kind of communion with higher powers and forces, but in its deepest sense it means union with the Divine. This seeking for union has up till now been undertaken mainly in three ways, Knowledge, Bhakti and Karma; thus giving birth to three yoga systems, Jnana yoga, Bhakti yoga and Karma yoga. Without going into the details of the systems, it can be assumed that we are all more or less conversant with their nature. But how does the Purna Yoga, the Integral Yoga, differ from the traditional yoga systems ? It is a difficult question to answer in an intellectual way, nor perhaps is it worth while understanding it in that way unless we can have the realisation of its essence in our heart.

To give an idea of what is meant by Purna Yoga, it is better, I think, to state how the sadhakas do this yoga than to tell what they do. If any of the sadhakas, elderly or young, is asked what he is doing here, it may be difficult for him to give a clear reply. Most of them have taken up the path so spontaneously that they have no distinct idea about what is yoga and what is not yoga. Their eating, sleeping, reading, playing, singing, speaking—everything is yoga. They cannot do without yoga. Their whole life is yoga. They do not know how to unite with the Divine by Bhakti, Karma or Jnana, but whatever they do, they do that for the Divine, by the Divine and with the Divine, and in a most natural way. They and all their activities, mental, vital and physical, are charged with the Divine. They have sunk deep into the Divine and this is called Purna Yoga or Integral Yoga which advocates neither world-shunning asceticism nor all-engrossing materialism.

In the Ashram all the modern world activities, namely, education in all its branches, industry, agriculture, games and sports are performed on a small scale with this difference that whereas in the outside world they are done for their own sake or for the sake of the individual, party or nation, here they are done for the Divine. To make the point clear, we shall discuss the matter by taking into consideration one aspect of such activities which has gained international acceptance. That is Games and Sports.

Games and Sports have been treated from ancient times as a means to maintain health and fitness of body, to increase its alertness and flexibility and to make it adaptable to circumstances like war and national defence. They also

give innocent pleasure and healthy recreation. All this is very good. A basis of sound and fit body is indispensable for any kind of endeavour whether intellectual, moral or religious. In yoga also the same necessity exists. But, presumably, it will not be wrong to state that, in the Ashram, Games and Sports are done not only for the above gains. To quote the Mother : "What do you want the yoga for ? To get power ? To attain peace and calm ? To serve humanity ? None of these motives is sufficient to show that you are meant for the path..." So to one who is meant for the path, the motive cannot be to attain good health and sound body. In other words, Games and Sports are practised in yoga not with the same objective as in the outside world. It is not for individual or group pleasure or vanity nor for international reputation. But just like the other things in yoga, they are done for the sake of the Divine.

Everything in yoga is done as an offering or sacrifice to the Lord of Works. Practising with 'nistha' this Karma Yajna, sacrifice of work to the Divine, the sadhaka comes to a time when the Divine Himself takes up his work. He Himself becomes the initiator, the worker and the work itself. With the sadhaka as instrument, the Divine pours down His treasure of power, force, consciousness and ananda into the material plane so as to awaken the divinity hidden in matter.

In yoga, Games and Sports are a kind of divine work. By the movements of limbs, by running, jumping, playing, the sadhaka invokes the Divine with the body. So when he plays, his motive is not to defeat his opponent in an assertive way but simply to play as best he can, offering the action to the Divine and invoking His force to conduct the action. If he wins, well and good; if not, that is also good because he has the full satisfaction in the play itself, the satisfaction of performing the Divine work.

In art, *i.e.*, poetry, painting, music and sculpture, the value of the work is determined from two points of view : one is its structural perfection, aesthetic attainment, technical refinement and grandeur; and the other is its content value, what is expressed in the mould of form, language, tune etc. Does it reveal the breath of the Unmanifest, a smile of the Eternal or the sound of His footsteps ? If it does, the quality of the work changes profoundly and one who has vision and feeling cannot help appreciating the work even at the cost of technical defect and structural imperfection.

In Games and Sports also one should not lose sight of these two aspects. What kind of force does one become the vehicle of in Games and Sports ? And how does he perform the action, with what style, technique and skill ? At first sight, these two may seem inseparable : one who has style and skill surely expresses some superior force. And when one is giving expression to a higher power, he will surely have a better style, skill and technique. The ques-

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tion is whether he allows the Divine to play through him or shuts out His entry by fetters of skill, technique and assertive enthusiasm. If there is divine intervention, his style and skill will improve, no doubt, but that may not be in a line with what he has learnt with care and labour. Probably he will have a wider and profounder basis and achieve a new orientation in bodily movement and constitution. Perhaps he will cry out in Delight :

“The body burns with Thy rapture’s sacred fire,
Pure, passionate, holy, virgin of desire.”

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