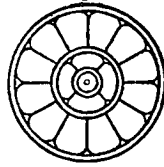


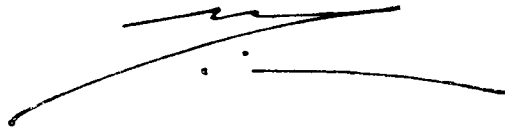
# MOTHER INDIA

AUGUST 15, 1960: THE BIRTHDAY OF SRI AUROBINDO

Price : Re. 1-0-0



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

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*"Great is Truth and it shall prevail"*

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## CONTENTS

	<i>Page</i>
TOWARDS AUGUST 15 : A PRAYER AND MEDITATION OF THE MOTHER ...	... 1
WORDS OF THE MOTHER ...	... 2
TALKS WITH SRI AUROBINDO ... <i>Nirodbaran</i>	... 3
LOVE, BEAUTY AND LIGHT Some Unpublished Letters of Sri Aurobindo ...	... 8
THE MOTHER OUR PILOT : Letters of Sri Aurobindo (Translated by Niranjan from the Bengali) ...	... 11
SRI AUROBINDO ON INDIA'S DESTINY ...	... 15
GLORY TO INDIA (Translated by Chinmoy from the Bengali) ... <i>Nolini Kanta Gupta</i>	... 22
AUGUST 15 AND ITS CALL TO THE FUTURE ... <i>Poorna</i>	... 25
THE IDEAL OF HUMAN UNITY AS ENVISAGED BY SRI AUROBINDO ... <i>A. B. Patel</i>	... 29
"LIBERTY, EQUALITY, FRATERNITY" ... <i>Sanat K. Banerji</i>	... 36
SLEEP YET, YOU MEN ... <i>Niranjan Guha Roy</i>	... 42
A WILLING SLAVE (Poem) ... <i>Prithwi Singh Nahar</i>	... 43

## CONTENTS

		<i>Page</i>
BREATH OF GOD (Poem)	... <i>Godfrey</i>	... 44
THUS SANG MY SOUL : Poems to the Mother	... <i>Har Krishan Singh</i>	... 45
THOUGHTS	... <i>Girdharlal</i>	... 46
THE GRACE OF SRI AUROBINDO AND THE MOTHER	<i>Compiled by</i> ... <i>Har Krishan Singh</i>	... 47
SRI AUROBINDO ASHRAM (Translated by J.N.Welingkar from the Hindi)	... <i>Narayanprasad</i>	... 48
BOOKS IN THE BALANCE Bachhonki Kala or Shiksha by Devi Prasad	<i>Review by</i> ... <i>A. B. Purani</i>	... 55

### Students' Section

RÉPONSES—ANSWERS	... <i>The Mother</i>	... 56
TALKS OF THE MOTHER	...	... 61
THE GOLDEN BIRD	... <i>Sri Aurobindo</i>	... 66
TALKS ON POETRY : Talk Nineteen	... <i>Amal Kiran (K.D. Sethna)</i>	... 68
THE BREATH OF THE SPIRIT	...	... 77
TOWARDS "THE LIFE DIVINE"	... <i>Narendra Nath Das Gupta</i>	... 78

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TOWARDS AUGUST 15  
A PRAYER AND MEDITATION OF THE MOTHER

THE being stands before Thee, its arms lifted, its palms open in an ardent aspiration.

O Sweet Master, it is a Love more wonderful and formidable than any that has manifested up till this day, of which the earth has need; it is for this Love that she implores....Who will be able or worthy to be its intermediary with her ? Who ? It matters little; but it must be done. O Lord, answer my call, accept this being as an offering, however modest its worth and whatever its limitations : Come.

More, always more; let the regenerating floods roll over the earth in beneficent waves. Transform and illumine. Accomplish this supreme miracle, so long looked for, of breaking these ignorant egoisms; awaken Thy sublime flame in each heart. Let us not become inert in a tranquil serenity. We must not take any rest till Thy new and sovereign Love is manifested.

Listen to our prayer; answer our call : Come !

*(August 13, 1914)*

## WORDS OF THE MOTHER

WHEN I give to people the flower meaning "Surrender of Falsehood", they seem to be hurt. They imagine that there is no falsehood in them to surrender. And my gift of the flower is felt as an accusation. But it is really a commonplace that all have some falsehood in them. There is no need to be hurt when a chance is given to surrender it and make a progress.

But this flower means that not only in the mind is falsehood to be surrendered : the surrender is to be made everywhere, in each part of the being—in the heart, in the mouth, even in the hands.

*Q. To whom is falsehood to be surrendered?*

It is your business to decide that. I cannot say to whom you want to make the surrender. The surrender is to be made to the one into whose image you wish to grow.

*Q. But you do know, Mother, that we want to make the surrender to you. Now, falsehood is such filth! Should filth be given to you?*

To me filth means nothing. It is a mere mirage. It does not touch me. And when you have disburdened yourself of it, it will mean nothing to you also. I will not touch you any more.

12-7-1960

\*

\*

I am giving you the flower signifying "Determination". Determination is not to be understood in the mechanical but in the psychological sense. The mechanical sense applies to processes in Nature—it is the same as Determinism. Psychologically, determination is the same as resolution which too has a flower of its own. But determination is resolution of a special kind. It implies that when one has decided to do a thing one does not leave it until it is finished. One pursues it with an obstinate resolution. Determination does not count the cost. I is something more definite, more certain than resolution.

15-7-1960

## TALKS WITH SRI AUROBINDO

*(This Talk is the first of a series from the Note-books of Dr. Nirodbaran who used to record most of the conversations which Sri Aurobindo had with his attendants after the accident to his leg in November 1938. Besides the recorder, the usual speakers were: Dr. Manilal, Dr. Becherlal, Purani, Champaklal and Dr. Satyendra. As the Notes were not seen by Sri Aurobindo himself, the responsibility for the Master's words rests entirely with Nirodbaran. He does not vouch for absolute accuracy, but he has tried his best to reproduce them faithfully. He has made the same attempt for the speeches of the others.)*

MARCH 4, 1940

AFTERNOON

N: "X reports that he has not done very well by withdrawal. Certain things disturb him still."

SRI AUROBINDO: "Mere withdrawal is not enough. If you simply withdraw, without throwing away the old seeds and don't replace the ordinary by the spiritual consciousness, the problem remains unsolved. The seeds may lie quiescent for a time but as soon as favourable circumstances present themselves they may come up. To separate oneself from the contact of the world does not mean that all one's desires and hankerings have ceased. Withdrawal may lead to a neutral state. But that is not our Yoga. We want spiritual dynamism—service of divine action."

N: "I thought X had thrown away the seeds and withdrawn not merely to cut off the external life but to grow into the spiritual consciousness as well."

SRI AUROBINDO: "That is what *you* thought. Did X also think like that?"

N: "If one writes philosophy with a spiritual attitude, the spiritual consciousness must be there."

SRI AUROBINDO (*laughing*): "Must it? Attitude is not enough. There must be inner change too. Of course, if one wrote from one's personal experience and vision, it would be different. But remaining withdrawn from the world doesn't mean that one is living in the spiritual consciousness. One may

## MOTHER INDIA

still be in the mental consciousness. Philosophical activities are in themselves of the mental plane.”

N : “What if a fundamental calm and peace is there ?”

SRI AUROBINDO : “That is not sufficient. There must be the spiritual dynamism too, injected into all one’s activities. When one’s mind is quiet, one may be in contact with the calm and peace which is a reflection of the Brahmic consciousness. But when one comes out into activity, the mind works in the same old way. One must use one’s withdrawal in the right manner and not be satisfied with the fundamental peace and calm.”

S : “There are many people who have peace, or experience a descent of peace into them—solid peace. N himself has had it.”

N : “No, I haven’t.”

SRI AUROBINDO : “He is indignantly denying it.”

S : “How about experience of light and force ?”

N : “Not of light.”

S : “In reporting about X he is speaking about his own problem, Sir.”

(Laughter)

N : “Yes, in a way, as I want to understand things.”

SRI AUROBINDO : “His own problem ? He has to get either to the Brahman or to the Psychic Being.”

N : “I am sure X’s psychic being has emerged.”

SRI AUROBINDO : “Simple emergence is not sufficient. The psychic being must come forward.”

N : “You spoke of the Brahmic consciousness just now. Didn’t you write to me that five or six people here are living in it ?”

SRI AUROBINDO : “In the Brahmic consciousness ? I must have used the term loosely. Peace and calm is only a part of that consciousness and not the whole of it. In a way one can say that they are living in it—in the sense that they are in contact with it or are able to go into it at will or may have a reflection of it in the mind and vital. All this is partial. One has to go farther up into the top consciousness above the head and remain there.”

N : “Then one won’t feel disturbed by things, I suppose.”

SRI AUROBINDO : “Even if things come, one won’t be touched by them. They will be on the external surface, coming and passing away, or one may look upon them as if they belonged to somebody else. This Brahmic consciousness descends first into the mental and then the peace and calm remains in all the activities of the mind. The test comes when it descends into the vital. Unless the vital is purified, one may fail. This is what is called falling from yoga, *yogabhraṣṭa*,—as it happened here in the early years. When the Brahmic consciousness descended into the vital, everybody broke down.”



N : "But one can remain in the mind, the Brahmic consciousness need not come down into the vital."

SRI AUROBINDO : "No, it needn't. But that is the old Yoga in which people want to depart from the world—living in their highest mental consciousness. When they come into contact with the external world, they can't keep their poise and calm and silence, because the old seeds have simply been lying dormant. There are also cases where people leave the vital to do as it likes. You know the story of the Vedantin and Ramakrishna. The Vedantin came to the Math with a concubine. Ramakrishna asked him why he was moving about with her. He replied, 'What does it matter ? Everything is Maya.' Then Ramakrishna said, 'I spit on your Vedanta.'"

N : "But wasn't there a risk of losing the Brahmic consciousness if that Vedantin allowed the vital a free play ?"

SRI AUROBINDO : "Yes, if he got too much interested in the vital so as to forget his Brahmic consciousness."

S : "You spoke of failure. What exactly is meant by it ?"

N : "As Sri Aurobindo says, getting interested in the vital and forgetting the Brahmic consciousness."

S : "There are many Yogis with the Brahmic consciousness who live in the world and have contact with the world without getting out of that consciousness."

SRI AUROBINDO : "Yes, one may exercise sufficient mental control over the vital."

N : "Then the question is whether one is controlling the vital by the mind or the Brahmic consciousness has actually descended into the vital, making all the vital activities proceed from that dynamism."

S : "Of course, their activities are of a limited kind. They accept life as much as is necessary for their purpose."

N : "Then that is different from what we are speaking of."

S : "Some people here say that the realisation of these Yogis is imperfect."

SRI AUROBINDO : "Not imperfect; they mean incomplete and that too from our standpoint. From the standpoint of those Yogis themselves, it is complete."

S : "It is only you, Sir, who have brought in this idea of acceptance of life, divine descent and integral transformation. Others wanted liberation."

SRI AUROBINDO : "Liberation is all right. That everybody wants and must have."

S : "Even the Vaishnavas and Tantriks wanted an extra-terrestrial Goloka and the escape into Shiva. In the South, Ramalinga Swami had the idea of an entire physical change and of immortality."

## MOTHER INDIA

SRI AUROBINDO : "In the South such an idea is more common."

S : "In connection with peace, Dr. B says that he gets peace by looking at the moon. I know of some people who get it by concentration on breath and repeating a mantra—say, Rama-nama—with each breath."

SRI AUROBINDO : "That is quite a well-known method of pranayama. Any kind of concentration that quiets the mind gives peace."

S : (*looking at N and smiling*) : "If N's path had been of the Brahmic consciousness, he would have got it by now. His is that of the psychic, perhaps."

N : "I may get it unconsciously one day."

SRI AUROBINDO : "Unconsciously you may have got it already." (*Laughter*)

N : "I couldn't quite follow the first part of your answer about the replacement by the spiritual consciousness."

SRI AUROBINDO : "What I said was that withdrawal is not enough, the old seeds also have to be thrown away and one has to get the spiritual consciousness. One has to get to the true spiritual dynamism as the source of action. What X is doing is in the old mental way—that is, the peace and calm may be there behind, but the source of action is mental."

N : "In such mental action the peace can be disturbed."

SRI AUROBINDO : "Does he say it gets disturbed?"

N : "Perhaps he gets preoccupied with the action."

SRI AUROBINDO : "That is different. One can be preoccupied without being disturbed. And if the mind and vital are agitated, it means one's consciousness has gone out into the action. One has to see for oneself how things are. This doesn't mean one shouldn't withdraw. Only, it is a first step. Doesn't X know the source of the disturbing ideas?"

N : "Yes, but he doesn't know why, after a long absence, they are coming again."

SRI AUROBINDO : "Because there is still something responsive."

## EVENING

S : "There is a difference between the reflection of peace and the descent of peace, isn't there?"

SRI AUROBINDO : "Yes. The descent of peace is more intense and powerful. Besides, the descent opens the way."

S : "For other things?"

SRI AUROBINDO : "Yes, and also for the ascent."

S : "Another question : how can one be free from ego, have a complete release from ego?"

SRI AUROBINDO : "What do you mean by a complete release?"

## TALKS WITH SRĪ AUROBINDŌ

S : "I mean that the sense of individuality will be lost."

SRĪ AUROBINDO : "When one gets into the cosmic or the transcendent, then the sense of ego is lost. Complete release is difficult unless the nature is transformed. When the sense of ego is lost, still the habit remains, the habit of the old nature. Of course, there is no 'I'-ness. One is not egoward in one's actions, etc., but the habit persists. Even when everything is rejected from all the parts, the subconscious remains and it carries the stamp of all the old things. But one is not affected or touched by the habit. One can see that it is something exterior, not properly belonging to one's being. People sometimes think and say that they have no ego, that their ego has disappeared. But others can see quite clearly their egoistic movements or actions which are not clear to themselves. Y, who is dead now, used to say the same thing; he had no ego. The more we contradicted him and pointed out to him the truth, the more he would insist. He used to say that he was moved by some Force. That was true, but he was moved by it because it flattered his ego; if it had not flattered his ego, he wouldn't have been moved. He was lacking in self-criticism. You can judge from one statement of his whether he had ego or not. He said, 'I alone possess the Truth.' (*Laughter*) He was of a Rajasic nature and it is very difficult in that nature to get rid of ego."

After this, Sri Aurobindo started to lie down in his bed. While doing so, he addressed C :

"C, I am going to be Gandhilike tomorrow. I will wear a dhoti short enough not to come in the way of walking. From tomorrow I will sit in the chair and write."

C : "And what about going for bath?"

SRĪ AUROBINDO : "Everything will come step by step. You don't want me to be like Subhas Bose, do you?" (*Laughter*)

## BEAUTY, LOVE AND LIGHT

(Some Unpublished Letters of Sri Aurobindo)

Q: You have written: "Beauty is an expression, a form of Ananda." In that case, is not Beauty itself part of the essence of the Divine, as are Ananda, Consciousness and Existence ?

If it is not so, should not one think that Love, Knowledge, Force, Light etc. are also expressions of Sachchidananda ?

SRI AUROBINDO : The word "expression" means only something that is manifested by the Ananda and of which Ananda is the essence. Love and Beauty are powers of Ananda as Light and Knowledge are of Consciousness. Force is inherent in Consciousness and may be called part of the Divine Essence. Ananda is always there even when Sachchidananda takes on an impersonal aspect or appears as the sole essential Existence; but Love needs a Lover and Beloved, Beauty needs a manifestation to show itself. So in the same way Consciousness is always there, but Knowledge needs a manifestation to be active, there must be a Knower and a Known. That is why the distinction is made between Ananda which is of the essence and Beauty which is a power or expression of Ananda in manifestation. These are of course philosophical distinctions necessary for the mind to think about the world and the Divine.

4-11-1935

Q. You further said in the letter on Beauty : "Aesthetically, the delight takes the appearance of *Rasa* and the enjoyment of this *Rasa* is the mind's and the vital's reaction to the perception of Beauty." I find it difficult to understand how Beauty, *Rasa* and delight are connected with each other.

SRI AUROBINDO : That can hardly be realised except by experience of Ananda. Ananda is not ordinary mental or vital delight in things. *Rasa* is the mind's understanding of beauty and pleasure in it accompanied usually by the vital's enjoyment of it (*bhoga*). Mental pleasure or vital enjoyment are not Ananda, but only derivations from the concealed universal Ananda of the Spirit in things.

7-11-1935

Q. You have said that peace, silence and knowledge come from above the mind. Do not love and joy too descend from above ?

SRI AUROBINDO : The soul's love and joy come from within from the

## LOVE, BEAUTY AND LIGHT

psychic being. What comes from above is the Ananda of the higher consciousness.  
16-1-1936

Q. How is it that only a rose looks beautiful and not many other flowers ?

SRI AUROBINDO : The rose is not the only beautiful flower, there are hundreds of others; most flowers are beautiful.

There are degrees and kinds of beauty, that is all.

The rose is among the first of flowers because of the richness of its colour, the intensity of sweetness of its scent and the grace and magnificence of its form.  
22/24-12-1936

Q. Is it in a flower itself that beauty lies ? What makes a flower beautiful ?

SRI AUROBINDO : Form, colour, scent and something else which is indefinable.  
24-12-1936

## II

Q. Plato's book, *The Banquet*, is said to be about Love and Beauty. Is it a kind of philosophy ?

SRI AUROBINDO : Not much philosophy there, more poetry.

Q. Shelley has translated *The Banquet* into English. Could I read it ?

SRI AUROBINDO : If you want to read it as a piece of literature, it is all right.  
2-1-1937

Q. I did not find so much of poetry in the book. Perhaps you have read it in the original Greek ?

SRI AUROBINDO : Even in a good translation the poetry ought to come out to some extent. Plato was a great writer as well as a philosopher—no more perfect prose has been written by any man—in some of his books his prose carries in it the qualities of poetry and his thought has poetic vision. That is what I meant when I said it was poetry.  
3-1-1937

Q. How do you find Plato's ideas about philosophy, about Nature, existence of the soul, etc. ?

SRI AUROBINDO : I don't know what are his ideas about philosophy or Nature. He believes in the soul and immortality and that is of course true.  
4-1-1937

Q. When poets, authors, inventors, etc., bring down or create something

## MOTHER INDIA

quite new, do they do so by going for the time being beyond the human consciousness ?

SRI AUROBINDO : No. They remain in the human consciousness, but they open to something in the larger mind or larger vital (worlds of thought and vision, worlds of beauty) and become a medium for the expression of things that are [there].

3-1-1936

### III

Q. You have explained to me something about Beauty and Ananda but not yet about the Divine Light. What is it and what its function ?

SRI AUROBINDO : It has no function—it is just Light of Divine Consciousness. If you mean the result, it is supposed to illumine, to remove darkness and obscurity, to make the nature fit for true consciousness, Knowledge etc.

8-11-1935

Q. How do you define true consciousness ?

SRI AUROBINDO : The consciousness that is aware of the Divine and the truth and does not look at things from the ego—it is wide and calm and strong and aspires to union and surrender—many things besides, but this is the essential.

8-11-1935

*(From N. D.)*

# THE MOTHER, OUR PILOT

LETTERS OF SRI AUROBINDO

*(Translated by Nirranjan from the Bengali in "Patravali")*

"How far have I progressed and how far yet have I to go?"—these questions have no value at all. Make the Mother your Pilot and move with the current. She will take you to your destination.

The Mother herself is the destination, everything is in her—when you find her, you find all; if you live in Her consciousness, then the rest will spontaneously blossom.

The attitude of the Mother does not change—it remains always the same. However, the sadhak according to his own state of mind sees a change in her attitude but it is not true.

If they are destroyed, in what will the transformation come? The old nature of the vital and the body has to be destroyed, not the vital or the body.

It is true, the Mother is in everybody and we ought to have a relation with her there; however, it is not a personal relation with any individual but with the Mother herself—the relation of a vast unity.

Increasing peace and true consciousness on one side and surrender on the other—this indeed is the true path.

The desire to destroy the vital is wrong—if the vital is destroyed, the body cannot survive; if the body falls, then no sadhana is possible.

Perhaps you have pulled in too much Force—that is why the body cannot hold it properly. If you remain a little peaceful, everything will be set right.

You are never without the Mother and the Divine. The Mother is in fact with you—the sadhak descends into Patala, in order to bring down the higher

## MOTHER INDIA

Light and Consciousness into it. Keep this faith and go on with an untroubled heart—the Light and the Consciousness will most certainly descend.

The Mother is there within you. The Force is actually working on the veil of physical nature that has covered you. With the Mother's Light, it will become transparent in the end.

One has to do sadhana calmly, quietly, without fear, always keeping faith in the victory of the Mother.

Everyone has difficulties—even those who do not work; difficulties come with great force even to them.

Difficulties come because you are not able to give up the external nature; when there will be a new birth of the external nature, they will disappear.

I have repeatedly tried to make this point clear to you that the difficulties do not leave you in an instant—they come from the external nature of man—that nature cannot be changed in a day or in a short time, not even in the best sadhak. But if you rely entirely on the Mother and go forward calmly, quietly, without getting restless, calling her at all times, then even if the difficulties crop up, they will not be able to do anything to you—in course of time they will become weak, perish and cease to exist altogether.

Everyone has this difficulty. To remain in a state of union at each moment cannot be easily achieved. If one quietly pursues his sadhana, it becomes normal after a time.

These difficulties are nothing but what is there in the external nature of man—they will be gradually removed by the working of the Mother's Force. There is no cause to be worried or dejected.

Always remember the Mother and call her; then the difficulty will disappear. Do not be afraid of the difficulty, do not get disturbed—be quiet and call the Mother.

The difficulties, of course, appear to be endless but that appearance is not true—only an Asuric Maya. If one follows the right path, finally it becomes free from all obstacles.



## THE MOTHER, OUR PILOT

It is somewhat like that; however, the difficulties do not so easily leave one—not even a great yogi. The difficulties of the mind can be got rid of with comparative ease, but those of the vital and the body do not go away so easily—they take time.

The difficulties can assail even great sadhaks, so what ? When the psychic condition is there and one is united with the Mother, then the attempts of all these attacks fail.

Sadhaks usually have these two difficulties—the first one belongs to the vital and the other to the body-consciousness. If one remains separate from them, they subside and at last fall away.

Everyone has these difficulties, otherwise the realisation in Yoga could be obtained in a short time.

It is in the nature of man that he cannot always remain inside—but when one can feel the Mother inside and outside, under all conditions, then this difficulty does not exist any more. Try to establish that condition.

Impure nature creates difficulties in the sadhak; desire for sex-indulgence, ignorance etc. belong to the impure nature of man. Everyone has them—when they come, instead of getting disturbed, one has quietly to detach oneself from them and reject them. If you say, “I am a sinner” etc., that only weakens you all the more. You should say, “This is impure human nature. These things exist in the ordinary way of life of man and let them remain so. I do not want them, I want only the Divine, I want the Divine Mother—these things have no place in my true consciousness. As long as they come, I shall calmly reject them—I shall not get perturbed. I shall refuse my consent.”

All human beings have this sex-force. This impulse is an important instrument of Nature by which she drives mankind. It creates the world, society and the family; the life of living beings largely depends on it. For this reason, everyone has this sex-impulse. Nobody is spared—the sex-impulse cannot be got rid of even by doing sadhana, it does not leave easily. So long as the life and the body are not transformed it comes back again and again. But the sadhak remains on his guard, imposes control on himself, rejects and chases it away every time it comes—by so doing, he at last eradicates it.

Calmly persist in your sadhana—by and by all that is left of the old nature will slowly drop away.

## MOTHER INDIA

Everyone has difficulties, there is no sadhak in the Ashram who has not any. Remain tranquil within; you will receive the help even when assailed by the difficulty. The true consciousness will flower on each plane.

To dwell on your difficulties all the time and go on thinking, "I am bad, I am bad", etc. is your greatest hindrance.

To rely with serenity on the Mother, to reject quietly the ordinary nature and gradually overcome it—this is the only way to bring about the transformation.

All the difficulties are not created by the hostile forces—they are really creations of the ordinary impure nature which is in everyone.

## SRI AUROBINDO ON INDIA'S DESTINY

*(This is in continuation of the series published in our last two issues. The "Bengalee" persisted in opposing the view put forward by Sri Aurobindo regarding the divine destiny in things. This evoked a fuller statement of his position in the present and the subsequent articles, which will be of particular interest to our readers as they are among the earliest public expositions of Sri Aurobindo's views on matters of deep philosophical import. The following article appeared in the "Karmayogin" of the 17th July, 1909.)*

### IV

#### FACTS AND OPINIONS

##### AN UNEQUAL FIGHT

OUR controversy with the *Bengalee* is like a conflict between the denizens of two different elements. Not only has our contemporary the advantage of prompt reply, but he has such a giant's gulp for formulas, such a magnificent and victorious method of dealing with great fundamental questions in a few sentences, such a generous faculty for clouding a definite point with sounding generalisations that he leaves us weak and gasping for breath. However in our own feeble way we shall try to deal with the several points he has raised. Their importance must be our excuse for the length of our reply.

One great difficulty in our way is that our contemporary for the convenience of his argument chooses to attribute to us the most ridiculous opinions born out of his own prolific brain and generous facility in reading whatever he chooses into other people's minds. He thinks, for instance, that by seeing a special manifestation of Divine Power and Grace in a particular movement we mean to shut God out from all others. This is a fair sample of the "inconsistencies" which the *Bengalee* is always finding in his own brain and projecting into ours. If we have to guard ourselves at every point against such gratuitous misconceptions, argument becomes impossible. Neither space nor patience will allow of it.

## MOTHER INDIA

### GOD AND HIS UNIVERSE

The *Bengalee* takes as its fundamental position that God is Absolute, Eternal and Universal in all movements and not limited to any particular. Very true, but a vague statement of abstract truth like this leads nowhere beyond itself. What are the concrete implications in this generalisation ? God is not only the Absolute, Eternal and Universal in his own essence, but He manifests in the relative, transient and particular. The Absolute is an aspect of Him necessary for philosophical completeness; but if He were only Absolute, then this phenomenal world would be only Maya, God *akartā*,<sup>1</sup> and all action purely illusory. If He were only Eternal we might regard this world as something not full of Him, but a separate creation which may or may not be subject to His immediate action. It is because He is the Universal that the clarified vision sees Him in every being and every activity. As the Absolute He stands behind every relative, as the Eternal He supports every transient and assures the permanence of the sum of phenomena; as the Universal He manifests Himself in every particular.

#### THE SCIENTIFIC POSITION

Still, there is the question, how does He manifest Himself ? There is a school which holds that He has once for all manifested Himself in certain eternal and universal laws and has no other connection with the universe. This was the attitude definitely taken by the *Indian Social Reformer* when it ridiculed S. Aurobindo Ghose's Uttarpara Speech. God does not speak to men through their inner selves in Yoga or otherwise, there is no way of communion between Him and humanity, there is no special action of His power or grace anywhere. He speaks to men only through His laws ; in other words, He does not speak to them at all. He does not act personally, He acts through His laws ; in other words, He does not act at all, His laws act. This is an intelligible position and it contains the whole real quarrel between Science and Religion.

Science does not as yet recognise God. Taking its stand on the material senses and logical argument from external phenomena it demands proof before it will admit His existence. It sees plenty of proof of Shakti, of Prakriti, of Nature ; it sees none of the Purusha or any room for His existence. If He exists at all, it must be as an Impersonal Being immanent in but different from Force and Energy and Himself inactive ; but even of this there is no proof. Religion holds that God is not only impersonal but personal, not only Purusha but Prakriti, not only Being but Shakti ; He is all. For the proof of its position Religion appeals to something higher than logic or the senses, to

<sup>1</sup> inactive (lit. "non-doer")

## SRI AUROBINDO ON INDIA'S DESTINY

spiritual experience and the direct knowledge drawn from the secret discipline it has developed in most parts of the world.

### FORCE UNIVERSAL OR INDIVIDUAL

It is not clear whether our contemporary recognises any personality in its Universal God or only recognises Him in all movements as natural Law. We hold that He manifests Himself in particulars not as Law, which is only a generalisation of the methods by which He acts, but as Shakti working for the Purusha. He puts Himself as force, energy, motive-power into every particular. It is perfectly true that every particular contains Him, but there are differences in the force of His manifestation. This is obvious in individuals. The strength of every particular individual is the strength of God and not his own, because every particular strength is merely a part of the Universal force and it is really the Universal force and not the individual strength that is acting. But in living beings, when consciousness has become separate, the individual is allowed to suppose himself to be strong in his own strength. He is not really so. God gave the strength and He can take it away. He gave it power to act and He can baffle its action of the fruits the individual sought and turn it to quite other results.

This is so common an experience that we do not see how any man with the power of introspection can deny it. Only at ordinary times, when things seem to be moving according to our calculations, we forget it, but on certain occasions He manifests Himself with such force either in events or in our own actions that unless we are blinded by egoism or by infatuation we are compelled to perceive the universality of the force that is acting and the insignificance of the individual. So also there are particular movements in particular epochs in which the Divine Force manifests itself with supreme power shattering all human calculations, making a mock of the prudence of the careful statesman and the scheming politician, falsifying the prognostications of the scientific analyser and advancing with a vehemence and velocity which is obviously the manifestation of a higher than human force. The intellectual man afterwards tries to trace the reasons for the movement and lay bare the forces that made it possible, but at the time he is utterly at fault, his wisdom is falsified at every step and his science serves him not. These are the times when we say God is in the movement, He is its leader and it must fulfil itself however impossible it may be for man to see the means by which it will succeed.

### FAITH AND DELIBERATION

The next point is the question of mature deliberation. The *Bengalee* here tries to avoid confession of its error by altering the meaning of language

The mature deliberation of which it spoke applies only to particular acts and, even then, it was not one man or a dozen but the whole self-conscious part of the country which took part in these mature deliberations. The facts do not square with this modified assertion. The majority even of the particular steps taken in pursuance of the ideas which swept over the country were not taken in pursuance of mature deliberation but were the result in some men of a faith which defied deliberation and in others of a yielding to the necessity of the moment. The National Council of Education came into existence because S. Subodh Chander Mallik plunked down a lakh of rupees and was followed by the zemindar of Gauripur, an act of faith, because the Rangpur school-boys and their guardians refused to go back on their action in leaving the Government school and established a school of their own, also an act of faith, and because some leading men of the country recognized that something must be done on the spot to prevent the honour of the nation being tarnished by abandonment of this heroic forlorn hope while others thought it a good opportunity to materialize their educational crochets. Was this mature deliberation or a compound of faith, idealism and risky experiment? The Boycott came into existence because of the wrath of the people against the Partition and the vehement advocacy of a Calcutta paper which, supported by this general wrath, bore down the hesitations of the thinkers, the politicians and the economists. Almost every step towards Swadeshi, every National school established was an act of faith in the permanence of the movement, a faith not justified by previous experience. These were acts of boldness, often of rashness, not of mature deliberation.

Mature deliberation implies that having consulted the lesson of past experience and weighed the probabilities of the future and the possibilities of the present, we take the step which seems most prudent and likely to bring about sure results. The Bombay mill-owners deliberated maturely when they said, "This movement born of a moment's indignation will pass like the rest; go to, let us raise our prices and make hay while the sun shines." The leaders deliberated maturely when they said, "The rush towards National Education will not last and if encouraged it will mean the destruction of private institutions and the payment of a double tax for education." So they stopped the students' strike, withheld their moral support and by this mature deliberation put, like the Bombay mill-owners, almost insuperable obstacles in the way of the movement. It was the unconsciously prepared forces in the country that made their way in spite of and not because of the mature deliberation. It was a minority convinced of the principles of self-help and passive resistance, full of faith, careless of obstacles, believing in the force of ideas, and not the whole self-conscious portion of the country, which mainly contributed, by its clo-

## SRI AUROBINDO ON INDIA'S DESTINY

quence, logic, consistency, self-sacrifice and the impact of its energy on the maturely-deliberating majority, to the permanence of the movement.

These are the facts. As for the conclusion from them we never made the absurd statement evolved out of the *Bengalee's* imagination that God is everywhere except in the conscious and deliberate activities of men. What we say and hold to is that the Divine force manifests itself specially when it effects mighty and irresistible movements which even the ignorance and egoism of man is obliged to recognise as exceeding and baffling his limited wisdom and his limited strength.

### OUR "INCONSISTENCIES"

A third point is the proposition that out of evil cometh good and that everything that happens or can happen is the best. Here our contemporary finds an inconsistency, for did we not say that *just now* everything works for the upraising of India because there is an upward trend which all forces assist? "Curiously enough," he says, "the writer thinks the two propositions identical." Curiously enough, we do. We say that just now India is being raised up and everything tends to God's purpose in raising her up, even calamity, even evil, even error. He uses them for His purpose and out of evil bringeth good. We said, "just now", because it is not true that God has always raised up India and always there has been an upward trend; sometimes He has cast her down, sometimes there has been a downward trend. Even that was for the good of India and the world as we shall take occasion to show. Where then is the limitation or the inconsistency? The limitation in the phrase "just now" applies to the upward trend, to the particular instance and not the principle that out of evil cometh good, which is universal and absolute.

### GOOD OUT OF EVIL

It is strange to find a philosopher like our contemporary parading in this twentieth century the ancient and hollow platitude that such a doctrine, however true, ought not to be applied to individual conduct because it will abrogate morality and personal responsibility. This is a strange answer, too, to an argument which simply sought to confirm the faith and endurance of our people in calamity by the belief that our confidence in our future was not mistaken and that these calamities were necessary for God's high purpose. The evil we spoke of was not moral evil, but misfortune and calamity. But we do not shrink from the doctrine that sin also is turned to His purposes and, so far as

## MOTHER INDIA

that goes, we do not see how such a doctrine abrogates morality. The wisdom and love of God in turning our evil into His good does not absolve us of our moral responsibility. Our contemporary shows this want of connection between the two positions himself when he asks whether one should not in that case play the traitor in order to assist the progress of the tendency. The gibe shows up the absurdity not of our faith but of his argument. Our selfish or sinful acts, our persistence in ignorance or perversity are for the best in this obvious sense that God makes out of them excellent material for the work He is about, which always tends to the good of humanity. The persecution of Christianity by the powers of the ancient world was utterly evil, but it was for the best ; without it there could not have been that noble reaction of sublime and exalted suffering which finally permeated the human mind with the impulse of sacrifice for high ideals, and by introducing a mental soil fit for the growth of altruism sowed the seed of love, sweetness and humanity in that hard selfish lust-ridden European world. The *Bengalee* no doubt would have counselled the Christian martyrs not to be so rash and unreasoning but to demand from God a balance of profit and loss for each individual sacrifice and only after mature deliberation decide whether to obey the voice of God in their conscience or offer flowers to Venus and divine homage to Nero.

## LOSS OF COURAGE

But the question of self-sacrifice needs separate handling and we have not the space to deal with it in this issue as its importance deserves. The *Bengalee* counters our suggestion about the superfluity of prudence and the instinct of self-preservation at the present moment by the assertion that there is an excess of unreasoning rashness. That is a question of standpoint and vocabulary. But when the *Bengalee* goes on to say that when evil results ensue from their imprudence the rash and unreasoning lose heart and become unbelievers, we have a right to ask to whom the allusion is directed. In the young, the forward, the men stigmatised by the *Bengalee* as rash and unreasoning we find no loss of courage or faith but only a hesitation on what lines to proceed now that the old means have been broken by repressive laws. Among the older men we do indeed find a spirit of depression for which we blame those who in the face of the repression drew in their horns out of mature deliberation and allowed silence and inactivity to fall on the country. But these were never men of faith. We who believe in God's dispensations have not lost heart, we have not become unbelievers. Our cry is as loud as before for Swaraj and Swadeshi; our hearts beat as high.



## SRI AUROBINDO ON INDIA'S DESTINY

### INTUITIVE REASON

However, there is hope for our contemporary. He has admitted in his idea of rationality the place of the intuitive reason, and it is precisely the intuitive reason, speaking oftenest in the present stage of human development through the inspiration that wells up from the heart, which is the basis of faith and exceeds the limits of the logical intellect. For this is the highest form of faith when the intuitive reason speaks to the heart, captures the emotions and is supported by reflection. This is the faith that moves mountains and there is nothing higher and more powerful except the yet deeper inner knowledge.

SRI AUROBINDO

## GLORY TO INDIA

PERHAPS patriotism, the idea of national unity, in India, is of recent origin. It is however a fourfold unity—a geographical unity, a national unity, a spiritual unity and a dynamic unity in action. National unity would mean a political and economic unity as well. Thanks to the contact with the English we have developed the idea of an Indian nationality. But it is not that our ancestors were quite in the dark about a living wholeness of India. Only the angles of vision, ancient and modern, differ.

The seers of India looked upon her not as a country so much as the expression of a truth. They hardly paid any heed to the uniformity of the administration of this vast territory, nor was it supremely important for them to dwell upon the individual or the collective prosperity of the people. India was to them the embodiment of the highest spiritual truth. India was a symbol of the mystery of the world. They appreciated the unity, freedom and greatness of India from this standpoint and have given an unequivocal expression to this conception.

No doubt, the language in which their ideas were couched remains a puzzle to us. They state that India is well-established within her four corners. She is bounded on the South and the East by the oceans and on the North there are the Himalayan ranges serving like a bow-string. This Indian continent is the seed of everything. We do not catch exactly what they meant by this term. They further say that one can attain to divinity on this Indian soil. Not only that, according to one's choice, from here one can become the Lord of the gods or remain an earthly being. They go still further and declare India a country having no equal. The reason is—you need not be surprised—that India alone is the land of activity, while the other countries are the field of enjoyment. That is to say, in their words, India is the only land where one performs action, good or evil, and the results are reaped in other countries.

Indians are active, the rest of the world is given to luxury! This sounds like a tremendous joke. Rather the opposite seems to be the truth. In fact, Europe, America, Japan and other countries minus India are creative, giving ever-new forms to strength and vigour. And India is enjoying a faint, far-off echo of those achievements. Compared with other countries, how much of new creation can India claim? India has been rather known as averse to action, busy with spirituality only. If work is anywhere done, it is in Europe. And because Europe is capable of labour, it does not mean that she has not the capacity for

enjoyment. She is as industrious as comfort-loving. If we judge with strict impartiality, it can at most be said that just as India has produced mighty workers on one hand, and great enjoyers of life on the other, so other countries also have thrown up these two kinds of heroes in an equal measure. It is not easy to determine which side of the scale has tipped.

Were then the ideas of our ancient thinkers mere fancies, void of any insight into the things of the external world? It is really difficult to admit that men of such power and acumen in other fields were wanting in common sense and were as ignorant of other countries as of their own. We have already said that we cannot easily grasp the precise meaning of the words used by them. We ascribe the present-day meaning to those words. It is extremely difficult on our part to discover the meaning they attached to those words. We offer an interpretation—we neither vouch for its authenticity nor insist on its acceptance.

It seems to us that our forefathers did not use these two words, action and enjoyment, in the gross material sense in which we take them. To us action means the movements of the limbs and the excitement caused in the muscles, blood vessels and nerves. But in their conception, action is the basic power behind all these physical movements. Action is the intense activity of energy in itself, a secret pressure of the inner Self and of the Omniscient Will, the Supreme Self, the very presence of which is responsible for the activities of the external senses. Indeed, what we now call action is but the translation of this secret activity, the pressure of consciousness. Action is the energy in seed-form dwelling in the heart, it is an awakened latency. The question of annihilation of action mentioned in our spiritual practice is not concerned with the outward, gross actions so much as the seed of action in the heart. Likewise enjoyment also does not refer to merely external things in the same measure as to the subtle delight of the inner Self. It is a special fruit, in the form of joy or sorrow, born of the subtle seed of action and enjoyment—as different reactions of energy directed through different channels.

India is the land of action. Now this means here one sows the seed of the psychic awakening, opens up a channel for the psychic being to flow. If one is lucky enough to be born an Indian, he has the privilege of putting a stop to the ordinary way of life and divert it to the spiritual life. For India represents the spiritual being of the world. India is the repository of spiritual knowledge. The secret mysteries of spiritual life and the ultimate truth have made India their abode, in the midst of all the cataclysms raging all over the world. Indians, in general, are by nature peaceful and docile (*sāttwic*), and they cannot give themselves up wholly to the play of the lower nature. There dwells in them a calm and quiet faculty of detachment which enables them to remain aloof from the sports of nature. That is why a new power can originate in them. A man's nature

or his inherent faculties are the outcome of the sanction of his psychic being. The more the psychic is detached from the play of nature the better he can lord it over his nature. On the other hand, when a man is steeped in the vitalistic and dark impulses (*raja* and *tama*) of his nature, he becomes identified with the forces of nature, losing himself in the enjoyment of nature. Under such circumstances, new seeds are not sown, only the old ones sprout and fructify.

The speciality of the collective life of Indians lies in its spiritual detachment. This detachment affords them the means of establishing themselves in the psychic being and creating new possibilities for ennobled future actions. This justifies the saying that India is the land of action. People in other countries are carried away by the instincts of their own nature and thus they develop their natural qualities as best they can. They have not the power to sow new seeds of action outside the domain of their natural latencies. This is the precise reason why other countries are considered as lands of enjoyment. If a man has to acquire a new power of action, he will have to be born in India with an illumined nature when the current force of natural inclination is almost exhausted. After having the experience of the psychic there he can enter into a new field of action. This does not mean that men of spiritual insight are to be found only in India. But we may, on the whole, hold that the Indian temperament bears the stamp of spirituality. This is only the expression of a general truth envisaged by our ancestors.

Also, there seems little doubt that a living, conscious image of the unity of India captured the attention of our ancestors and this has by no means been a gift of the modern time or Europe. We of modern India have a particular conception of the unity of India. But let us not forget that our forefathers too had a conception of this unity. Even if we fail to subscribe to their view and fail to cry ditto to their words :

The gods ever sing their songs :  
Blessed be those who are born in India as man.  
For their godhood they are destined to own liberation  
And Heaven once again,

at least let us say :

After the period of our sojourn in Heaven  
We know not where we shall see the light of day.  
Truly, blessed are those who dwell in India  
With senses unimpaired.

NOLINI KANTA GUPTA

(Translated by Chinmoy from the Bengali)

## AUGUST 15 AND ITS CALL TO THE FUTURE

My gaping wounds are a thousand and one  
And the Titan kings assail,  
But I cannot rest till the task is done,  
And wrought the eternal will.

SUCH is the mighty unassailable spirit of the Sage who was born on this day and sanctified it forever in the spiritual history of the universe.

August 15 is also the birthday of free India, of India re-born, of India re-arising with glorious possibilities. India's freedom is not meant for India alone, to enjoy for herself, shut up within her geographical boundaries of sea and mountain. It signifies, as Sri Aurobindo has affirmed, "the entry into the comity of nations of a new power with untold potentialities which has a great part to play in the political, social, cultural and spiritual future of humanity." Thus India's freedom is essential not only for herself but also for the sake of the world at large.

But this she cannot do unless we remember always that on this day was born a man, a veiled godhead, who held in his grip the destiny of the race and laboured all through not for the liberation of his own individual soul or a group of souls only but for the liberation and transformation of the mind, life and body of the whole earth. He came down for that purpose and left his body, the tabernacle of the Spirit, to work out that very purpose the more swiftly. But, be sure, he is ever with us in spirit. This we must not forget even for a moment as the Mother herself spoke distinctly from her depths, shortly after Sri Aurobindo's passing, relating the truth of her beautiful experience :

"Lord, this morning Thou hast given me the assurance that Thou wouldst stay with us until Thy work is achieved, not only as a consciousness which guides and illumines but also as a dynamic Presence in action."

Verily, Sri Aurobindo was not one of those "alones" who could easily slip away into the Alone and dwell there in a "solitary bliss". For he is the one who constantly proclaimed and realised the truth :

Imperfect is the joy not shared by all.

And, amidst the dark despairing cries of 'Humanity in Peril', it was the Great

## MOTHER INDIA

Yogi of Pondicherry who tirelessly kept on singing the Spirit's Philosophy of Hope, pouring out his spiritual energies and influence on humanity for the upliftment of the earth-consciousness into the diviné Supermind.

This is the double-significance of August 15th—the birthday of Free India, a New Force that is among the other nations of the world, and the birthday of Sri Aurobindo, the Deliverer of the spiritual truth.<sup>1</sup> This is not a mere coincidence but “a sanction of the Divine Power”, a significant and a necessary sanction in the course of the evolutionary process of the Godhead unfolding in time. Thus the day is not merely a nominal date but a doubly glorified occasion to be celebrated eternally in a living morning-freshness and noon-day-vigour. And its significance is to be felt all the more, and more naturally, by those who have accepted Sri Aurobindo's Gospel of Life, his Spiritual Vision.

This Vision gains an added momentousness when he says that his aims and ideals were conceived “in my childhood and youth.” The statement evidently reveals that Sri Aurobindo was a Seer even from his childhood.

The divine vision of a Seer is vast in its scope, comes from beyond the three *Kālas*, *tri-kālātīta*, out of the depths of the Infinite and Eternal. Our mental look, on the contrary, is limited and narrow as it takes its position in Kala, the finitude of time. Ordinarily it is so warped that sometimes we cannot see even what is happening just under our noses. That is why we should all the more make a conscious effort to bring forward again and again, without the least disgust and impatience, and actively keep before us, the divine vision of the Seers, to whichever land they may belong, till it ultimately becomes clear and natural to us so that we too may fulfil it in our life. And by uplifting our own life we shall, at the same time, help and uplift others too.

Let us see how the towering significance Sri Aurobindo ingems into his glorious Vision of 15th of August is as important to the world as a whole as it is to India herself. The Prophet of Life Divine illumines this Day of redoubled glory with his five shining Dreams.

The first and foremost dream that he saw was India's freedom. And India has achieved her freedom. But not unity yet.<sup>2</sup> It was a painful thing to

<sup>1</sup> Many years ago the world-poet Rabindranath Tagore, who bent his head before none except God, bowed in a salutation to Sri Aurobindo and proclaimed the great significance of his Word “You have the Word and we are waiting to accept it from you India will speak through your voice, Hearken to me” He addressed the Master as the “voice incarnate, free, of India's soul” And it is high time his countrymen recognised the saving truth that the Word of Sri Aurobindo embodies, and followed it up increasingly for their own well-being and that of the world

<sup>2</sup> Political freedom is indispensable But the inner freedom and unity are still more essential, without which the hard-won political freedom and sovereignty would remain unsteady, unestablished and even insecure.

every genuine Indian, whether Hindu or Mohammedan or any other, to conceive of a divided India, all the more when it was found to be deliberately accepted. Fortunately, current affairs show a sign of longing to live amicably while still remaining apart. About the division, Sri Aurobindo cautions us : "It is to be hoped that the Congress and the nation will not accept it as for ever settled or as anything more than a temporary expedient." "For if it lasts," Sri Aurobindo warns, "India may be seriously weakened, even crippled : civil strife may remain always possible, possible even a new invasion and a foreign conquest."

Recent potentially calamitous happenings on our age-old quiet Himalayas evidently show that this has become partly true. Our huge neighbour, Communist China, has committed an avaricious act, chosen to become quarrelsome by making flagrant military incursions into the northern and eastern frontiers of India and thus occupying our territory for no reason. As far back as 1947, Sri Aurobindo with his unerring far-sightedness had warned India of such possibilities endangering national security.<sup>1</sup>

India then seemed to have turned a deaf ear to it, perhaps could not even conceive and still less believe that such a thing would ever be possible, at least from an agelong close friend like China. Even lately we could not imagine that China would vehemently trample upon the noble principles of panchsheel, so recently agreed upon. But the divine warning is now appearing before us in a stern practical form, perhaps pointing all the more to the need of the unification of divided India. All this is to be taken note of and carefully considered with a larger statesmanship by the leading men of the subcontinent and its teeming millions as well. There appears to be an urgency now, more than ever before, for the nation to read the Message again and again and try to follow the wise counsel of the Master-seer.

Sri Aurobindo points out how the re-union of divided India may be and can be materialised. "The partition of the country must go, it is to be hoped by a slackening of tension, by a progressive understanding of the need of peace and concord, by the constant necessity of common and concerted action, even of an instrument of union for that purpose." He further, with a striking sense

<sup>1</sup> Decades ago he gave voice to a still more clear, definite prophetic utterance : "In Asia a more perilous situation has arisen standing sharply across the way to any possibility of a continental unity of the peoples of this part of the world, in the emergence of Communist China. This creates a gigantic bloc which could easily englobe the whole of Northern Asia in a combination between two enormous Communist Powers, Russia and China, and would overshadow with a threat of absorption South-Western Asia and Tibet and might be pushed to overrun all up to the whole frontier of India, menacing her security and that of Western Asia with the possibility of an invasion and an overrunning and subjection by penetration or even by overwhelming military force to an unwanted ideology, political and social institutions and dominance of this militant mass of Communism whose push might easily prove irresistible"—*The Ideal of Human Unity*, p. 395 (Ind. Ed)

## MOTHER INDIA

of surety, foretells that "by whatever means the division must and will go. For without it the destiny of India might be seriously impaired and even frustrated. But that must not be."

There was one more serious internal problem which, however, has recently come to its complete solution almost. The Congress itself had pledged the formation of linguistic provinces even long before Independence. And Sri Aurobindo in this connection declared as far back as 1947 that to effect this formation, "if not immediately, yet as early as may conveniently be, might well be considered the wisest course." But his far-sighted advice was not given attention to and the Congress Government delayed to execute its already declared policy. The result was that the nation had to pay a price for it by way of sporadic outbursts of communal wranglings, even loss of life,—a most unhealthy sign for a newly freed India. Still, it is a matter of great satisfaction to acknowledge that the linguistic division of the Dravidian peoples and of Gujarat and Maharashtra has gradually taken place. Sri Aurobindo further adds that "a merger of the Hindi-speaking part of the Central Provinces and U.P. would complete the process." And "India's national life will then be founded on her natural strength and the principle of unity in diversity which has always been normal to her and its fulfilment the fundamental course of her being and its very nature, the Many in One, would place her on the sure foundation of her Swabhava and Swadharma."

It may be noted that it is always wise to give a careful listening to the advice of the Wise. By so doing, indeed, we honour ourselves. And when we execute what they say, we actually go to live in the state of wisdom itself. There is a great truth when Plato says that philosophers should rule the State. But there is a still greater, wider and deeper truth in the following statement of the Mother :

"When I say that the 'Wise' should rule the world, it is not from a political but from a spiritual point of view.

"The various forms of Government can remain as they are; that has only a secondary importance. But whatever be the social status of the men who are in power, they should receive their inspiration from those who have realised the Truth and whose will is one with the Supreme's Will."

This is quite in line with the ancient Indian political practice. The king, the then head of the State, always sought for the advice of the Sage or Seer. By adopting this sacred principle many a grave danger that may otherwise fall upon humanity can be averted with much less difficulty, even with ease.

*(To be continued)*

POORNA



## THE IDEAL OF HUMAN UNITY AS ENVISAGED BY SRI AUROBINDO

(A SPEECH BY A. B. PATEL AT MADRAS ON JUNE 28, 1960)

Mr. Chairman and Friends,

I am grateful indeed to the Indian Council for Cultural Relations for this honour and privilege to address you this evening on the "Ideal of Human Unity as Envisaged by Sri Aurobindo".

As early as July 1909 on the eve of his retirement from Indian politics in which he took a leading and decisive part for the first few years of this century, Sri Aurobindo wrote an open letter to his countrymen in which he stated : "Our ideal for Swaraj involves no hatred of any other nation nor of the administration which is now established by law in this country. We find a bureaucratic administration, we wish to make it democratic; we find an alien government, we wish to render it Indian. They lie who say that this aspiration necessitates hatred and violence. Our ideal of patriotism proceeds on the basis of love and brotherhood and it looks beyond the unity of the nation and envisages the ultimate unity of mankind."

This he wrote more than fifty years ago when the present trends towards human unity were not visible. From September 1915 to July 1918, he wrote a series of articles in the philosophical monthly *Arya* which have later been published in the form of a book *The Ideal of Human Unity*. This book, together with his other one *The Human Cycle*, will be very profitable and enlightening reading for a politician or a statesman who wishes to approach world problems with a vision embracing the whole of humanity. In these articles Sri Aurobindo has put forth clearly the ideal to be aimed at and achieved, the historic background of various social, political, economic and other movements of the past, the formation of larger and larger human aggregates leading to national units, the forces at work and the various possibilities leading ultimately to human unity and the possibilities of the forms this unity may take.

The Ideal of Human Unity claims our serious and sincere attention on diverse grounds. Humanity is passing through a difficult period of recurrent world tensions and dangers of clash and conflict and often there is a mortal fear of a catastrophe which may destroy a great part of the human race and bring a

## MOTHER INDIA

crash of civilisation. In view of this peril of unprecedented destruction there is an urgent necessity not only to recognise the need for human unity but to strive in every possible way to make humanity conscious of its essential unity and to educate an ever increasing number of people to live up to this unity in all their individual and collective relations.

Owing to the development of modern swift transport and system of communications the world has become small and the life in any part affects the life of the other parts in a way which would have been impossible a century back. Each feels in its culture, political tendencies and economic existence the influence and repercussion of events and movements in other parts of the world. Each feels subtly or directly its separate life overshadowed by the life of the whole. Continent has no longer a separate life from continent; no nation can any longer isolate itself and live a separate existence. Now the disparate masses of humanity, once living to themselves, have been drawn together by a process of subtle unification into a single mass which has already a common vital existence and is rapidly forming a common mental life. Great precipitating and transforming shocks were needed which would make the subtle organic unity manifest and reveal the necessity and create the will for a closer and organised union and these shocks were provided by the two world wars. The need for human unity which would take a practical shape is now not only in the Utopian thinker's speculating mind but in the practical consciousness of all humanity because of this new common existence. There is a slow but sure movement in the direction of a world civilisation by a process of synthesis. Each regional group will make its contribution to this world civilisation according to its capacity, characteristics and progress.

Nature and its evolutionary process have created larger and larger human aggregates, from family to city, to clan or tribe and other larger groups of varied kinds and finally national units. The legitimate question one may pose is whether the nation, the largest *natural* unit which humanity has been able to create and maintain for its collective living, is also its last and ultimate unit or whether a greater aggregate can be formed which will embrace many and even most nations and finally all in its united totality. For the obstacles of space, the difficulties of organisation and the limitations of the human heart and brain have necessitated the formation first of small, then of larger and yet larger aggregates so that man may be gradually trained by a progressive approach till he is ready for the final universality. The family, the commune, the clan or tribe, the class, the city state or congeries of tribes, the nation, the empire are so many stages in this progress and constant enlargement. National units have firmly developed in some parts for the last few centuries while in others they are still under process of formation in spite of many obstructions and difficulties

## THE IDEAL OF HUMAN UNITY AS ENVISAGED BY SRI AUROBINDO

which they face for historic reasons and circumstances. But it appears now very certain that in the not very distant future all the dependent or subject peoples of the world will benefit from the principle of self-determination generally accepted by world public opinion. The internal freedom movements in these subject nations helped by liberal forces abroad will bring independence for them. Often it seems that the small nations have a precarious existence but the world forces in operation now are balancing and adjusting circumstances which help the promotion and maintenance of even backward national units. This process is, it appears, Nature's step towards the final stage of world union.

For the last century or two, advanced thinkers of the world have been urging that service to humanity should be the highest goal and ideal for human beings and for this purpose one should exceed the boundary of race, religion, creed or nation. The idea of humanity as a single race of beings with a common life and a common general interest is among the most characteristic and significant products of modern thought and has helped to create a psychology for international attitude and approach.

Religions have proclaimed again and again, though their followers have mostly failed to practise, the Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of men. One of the chief preoccupations of ethics and religion has been the obligations of man to mankind. The pressure of the large movements and fluctuations of the race has always affected the destinies of its separate communities, and there has been a constant return pressure of separate communities social, cultural, political, religious to expand and include, if it might be, the totality of the race.

The experience of the spiritual lights from times immemorial has been that the deepest self in all beings and things is the Divinity within waiting to be manifest. Humanity is the leader of evolution on this earth and comes from the same source. The One has manifested as the Many and there is essential unity in this apparent diversity. Humanity must accept and realise this essential unity to fulfil its destiny. During the Vedic period the Seers announced that all humanity is one family.

Thus there is a deep call to us to accept the Ideal of Human Unity. But our inherited habits, our entrenched pettiness, greed and selfishness, our individual and national egos make us narrow-minded and cloud our vision and as a result we refuse or fail to accept the message of this truth of human unity which is essential and in the long run inevitable for the fulfilment of human destiny. But the Ideal of Human Unity has been, however slowly, coming to the front in the consciousness of humanity and the vanguard amongst us already feel its urgent and irresistible call.

Those who have felt this call should endeavour to realise consciously that unity and to exceed the present common idea and attitude of national

## MOTHER INDIA

patriotism to reach the goal of world unity. A conscious effort by an ever increasing number of people is necessary to realise within oneself this human unity and to endeavour to live up to it and to take all possible steps to encourage others around to do likewise. It is for men of our days to accept the great challenge for the onward march of humanity. The perfect society will be that which most entirely favours the perfection of the individual; the perfection of the individual will be incomplete if it does not help towards the perfect state of the social aggregate to which he belongs and eventually to that of the largest possible human aggregate, the whole of united humanity.

Let us consider how clearly and emphatically Sri Aurobindo has set forth before the world the ideal of human unity and the form it should take: "The ideal society or State is that in which respect for individual liberty and free growth of the personal being to his perfection is harmonised with respect for the needs, efficiency, solidarity, natural growth and organic perfection of the corporate being, the society or nation. In an ideal aggregate of all humanity, in the international society or State, national liberty and free national growth and self-realisation ought in the same way to be progressively harmonised with the solidarity and unified growth and perfection of the human race..."

"Therefore it would seem that the ideal or ultimate aim of Nature must be to develop the individual and all individuals to their full capacity, to develop the community and all communities to the full expression of that many-sided existence and potentiality which their differences were created to express, and to evolve the united life of mankind to its full common capacity and satisfaction not by the suppression of the fullness of life of the individual or the smaller commonalty, but by full advantage taken of the diversity which they develop. This would seem the soundest way to increase the total riches of mankind and throw them into a fund of common possession and enjoyment..."

"The peace, well-being and settled order of the human world is a thing eminently to be desired as a basis for a great world culture in which all humanity must be united. But neither of these unities, the outward or inward, ought to be devoid of an element even more important than peace, order and well-being,—freedom and vigour of life which can only be assured by variation and by the freedom of the group and of the individual. Not then a uniform unity, not a logically simple, a scientifically rigid, a beautifully neat and mechanical sameness but a living oneness full of healthy freedom and variation is the ideal which we should keep in view and strive to get realised in man's future..."

"If this object is to be secured, the peoples of humanity must be allowed to group themselves according to their free way and their natural affinities; no constraint or force could be allowed to compel an unwilling nation or distinct grouping of peoples to enter into another system or join itself or remain

joined to it for the convenience, aggrandisement of political necessity of another people or even for the general convenience, in disregard of its own wishes....”

“For only so could there come the psychological modification of life and feeling and outlook which could accustom both the individual and group to live in their common humanity first and most, subduing their individual and group egoism, yet losing nothing of their individual or group power to develop and express in its own way the Divinity in Man which, once the race was assured of its material existence, would emerge as the true object of human existence....”

“The great necessity, then, and the great difficulty is to help this idea of humanity, which is already at work upon our minds and has even begun in a very slight degree to influence from above our actions, and turn it into something more than an idea, however strong, to make it a central motive and a fixed part of our nature. Its satisfaction must become a necessity of our psychological being just as the family idea or the national idea has become each a psychological motive with its own need of satisfaction....”

Sri Aurobindo examines the various possibilities leading ultimately to the goal and the different forms and shapes this unity may take. It may be a World State with unitary Government and a tendency to create uniformity of life. Or it may be a federation of various national units with freedom to these national units and individuals in their manifestation and expression of life. Or it may be a confederation of various national units. But the most desirable form would be a federation of free nations in which all subjection or forced inequality and subordination of one to another would disappear and, though some might preserve a greater natural influence, all would have an equal status. A Confederacy would give the greatest freedom to the nations constituting the world state, but this might give too much room for fissiparous or centrifugal tendencies to operate; a federal order would then be the most desirable. All else would be determined by the course of events and by general agreement or the shape given by the ideas and necessities that may grow up in the future. A world union of this kind would have the greatest chances of long survival or permanent existence.

A mechanical arrangement, political or administrative without feeling a psychological need for unity will hardly prove fruitful. Any attempt to create a uniformity of life by any world government will tend to lead ultimately to stagnation. Sri Aurobindo says : “The evolution moves to diversity, from a simple to a complex oneness. Unity the race moves towards and must one day realise. But uniformity is not the law of life. Life exists by diversity; it insists that every group shall be, even while one with all the rest in its universality, yet by some principle or ordered detail of variation unique. The over-centralisation

## MOTHER INDIA

which is the condition of a working uniformity, is not the healthy method of life. Order is indeed the law of life, but not an artificial regulation.”

When Sri Aurobindo gave a message to the Indian nation on the eve of the independence of India on 14th August 1947 he set out the five dreams he had hoped to see fulfilled in his life-time which had looked like impracticable dreams. One of these dreams was a world union forming the outer basis of a fairer, brighter and nobler life for all mankind. He then stated that unification of the human world is under way; there is an imperfect initiation organised but struggling against tremendous difficulties.

The process by which humanity may reach its goal of a world union has various possibilities, according to Sri Aurobindo. The United Nations may slowly evolve into a world union of free and independent nations ultimately forming a world federal government under pressure of an informed world public opinion. To encourage and accelerate such a desirable evolutionary process some of the glaring defects inherent in the present constitution of the U.N. will have to be patiently and tactfully removed. Any hasty or impatient action may endanger the structure and do more harm than good. The concentration of power in the hands of five permanent members of the Security Council and the right of veto will have to be abolished. The present tendency of unwillingness or hesitation to discuss matters styled as “internal affairs” of a nation prevent or obstruct a natural growth of the U.N. towards becoming an effective instrument of world organisation. There is hesitation and even opposition to discussion of problems arising out of internal affairs of a nation even when they have world-wide repercussions and threaten world peace or harmony or involve important human rights. The U.N. has to move in the direction of tackling of such problems. The condition precedent for such a bold policy is a general desire among the nations to strengthen the United Nations and readiness to surrender a part of their sovereignty for the good of the human race. All nations irrespective of their system of government or the ideologies they follow should be admitted as members of the U.N. A psychology should be built up to accept the need slowly but steadily to create in the U.N. an instrument to achieve world peace and ultimately a world federal government. The idea of the common interest of the race in the internal affairs of a nation is bound to increase as the life of humanity becomes more unified but this process should receive the support of the best minds in the world.

Another possibility towards movement to world union is that some aggregates grow larger and larger until they become large enough to include continents or their substantial parts. Such large aggregates may then by common consent form some form of loose world union regulating the international order on a sound and firm basis.

## THE IDEAL OF HUMAN UNITY AS ENVISAGED BY SRI AUROBINDO

There is also a possibility that a few powerful states of the world with their satellite allies may form powerful blocks and may then follow the same procedure of having some kind of loose World Union with an International order based on a firmer and sounder basis. There is also a possibility that a single people or a national unit may become very powerful and use that power with wisdom and tactful diplomacy and may dominate the world scene and may create an artificial world order. But in all the last mentioned three possibilities the national and individual egos with their selfishness, greed, pride and desire for domination will hardly create conditions for the survival of such arrangements or union for a long time. However, these possibilities need to be noted and guarded against by those who have the power of prevention and the welfare of the race in their charge. Unless vigilance is exercised unsuccessful experiments may unduly delay the formation of the required world order and humanity may have to pass through many dangerous catastrophes.

*(To be continued)*

## “LIBERTY, EQUALITY, FRATERNITY”\*

THE luminous gospel of the French Revolution has been shaping the history of the world for the last two hundred years, blindly enough for the most part and yet invincibly. The world will emerge out of chaos when the leaders of thought and action realise its true import and set about giving it practical shape, in a manner that is both logical and effective. Fraternity is the secret. Once that is discovered and finds a true basis, liberty and equality will be automatic; we shall see the end of an age-long conflict, the struggle between the ideals of law and liberty, of the group and the individual, the state and its citizens, nations and empires.

Whatever may have been achieved in France in the early days of the Revolution,—we are reminded here of the “sans-coulottes” and their “baker” king Louis XVI who was made to come with the procession from Versailles,—what the French Revolution secured in the long end was not equality or fraternity, but liberty. It was liberty given to serfs to manage their own affairs, vote for and choose their governments, it was liberty to think and speak as one liked, it was liberty for each nation to shape its policies free from alien interference; it also meant the liberty to exploit the weak and the helpless, the domination of the few rich over the teeming proletariat mass, the establishment of empires over the decrepit nations of Asia and in the darkness of primitive Africa. A certain measure of equality was secured in the matter of law-suits, and in theory at least the opinion of one man was considered equally good as that of any other; this last concession was not generally extended to women till after the end of the Great War. Of fraternity there was hardly a trace except perhaps in the polite language of regal correspondence. Even here the Russian Czar’s refusal to address Napoleon III of France as “Mon Frère” almost plunged Europe in the Crimean War. And the “blundering discords” of the European Concert had their *finale* in the two “great” wars of our century.

Let us glance rapidly at the work done in the name of liberty. At an early stage of the Revolution in France, the serf was given the freedom to devote the entire week to the tillage of his soil and not be bound by the hated “*corvée*”. This right was later extended under the influence of Napoleon to the Italian and German peasants. A reformist Czar found it useful to grant similar concessions to the vast mass of Russian serfs in the sixties of the century. The British gave the lead in the emancipation of slaves (partly because they were no

\* The substance of a talk recently given to the students of Sri Aurobindo International Education Centre, Pondicherry, with slight modifications of detail.



## “LIBERTY, EQUALITY, FRATERNITY”

longer profitable). The Americans had to fight a civil war to emancipate the negro, although it has taken nearly a century to get him the elementary citizenship rights and the battle is not yet at an end. The “hacienda” continued in Latin America till fairly recent times. The idea of citizenship rights had been spreading in Asia and Africa too. The Manchus in China were forced to withdraw their “pigtail” order. In Japan the old-time Samurai were no longer permitted to test their double swords on innocent passers-by. In the Iran of the modern Pahlavis the right to the asylum of “bast” did no longer need to be exercised by foreign embassies. The Egyptian fellahin and the purdah women of Turkey at last could find their champions.

The right to the vote and the liberty to choose their own representatives in parliament was not conceded without a fight, but by the end of the century the victory had been won, at least in the greater part of the Western world. Here again it was England that gave the lead. The great Reform Act of 1832 at last purged the House of Commons of a “rotten” franchise and secured for the newly rich middle class in England the right to choose their own governments. It was still a far cry from democracy, for the liberty to vote did not belong yet to the labourers in town or village nor to any one without a decent subsistence. The Chartist attempt in the forties of the century came to an ignominious end because the men of property did not wish to admit as their compeers men without property. But circumstances forced their hands and, by the middle eighties, practically all men who were not lunatics or criminals got the privilege of the vote. The continents of Europe and America, with notable exceptions in Czarist Russia, had been more or less closely following in the footsteps of Great Britain in this matter of the vote.

To give the vote was not enough. The rulers needed to “educate their masters”. England again showed the way and compulsory elementary education came to be almost universally accepted as a creed. Along with the right to the three R’s must go the right to speak and write as one chose. This right had been questioned even in the course of the Revolution, under the Jacobin regime. In the era of Metternich and for some time after, opinion had been free in hardly any of the countries on the continent. We hear of German professors having to submit to the censor the names of the books they took out of the library. The second empire in France was harsh on the opponents of the new regime and a man of the calibre of Hugo had to go to the Channel Islands in order to write and talk freely. Bismarck’s Germany could also be hard on the free thinkers, and Russia till a late date remained a bye-word for intolerance. Nevertheless, liberty of speech triumphed in the end, both in the Anglo-Saxon countries and elsewhere in Europe, till the coming of dictators in the inter-war years tended to put the clock back for a time.

## MOTHER INDIA

But the most spectacular result of the Revolutionary gospel appeared in the domain of international politics. It led on the one hand to the demand for freedom on the part of nations hitherto subject; on the other hand it gave the stronger nations a fresh claim to dominate the weaker peoples and carve out new empires. Almost an immediate result of the Napoleonic wars was the independence of Latin America. The colonies had long heard of the neighbouring United States; Napoleon's dethronement of the Spanish king gave them an excuse for throwing off their foreign yoke. The weakness of Ferdinand after the restoration helped their cause. The strength of the British navy with its undisputed mastery of the seas gave the necessary backing to President Monroe's paper doctrine about "hands off America" and brought to birth a "new world to redress the balance of the old".

Among the older peoples on this side of the Atlantic, the French Revolution had lighted a fire that was not to be quenched. Greece declared her right to the ancient heritage, fought her own battle against the Turk almost single-handed, with only a handful of romantic volunteers like Lord Byron to help from abroad, until the destruction of the Turkish fleet at Navarino by the Russian commander suddenly made the Great Powers of Europe alive to the beauty of the ancient world and Greece attained her freedom with their help and blessings. Belgium followed closely on her heels. There it was the uncongenial union with the protestant and agricultural Netherlands that galled. Napoleon had brought the idea of political liberty, if not liberty itself, to the merchants of Ghent and Antwerp. His immediate successors on the throne of France were less prone to liberalism, but the hope of maintaining a permanent buffer between France and a future militaristic Germany made them less inclined to oppose. Ultimately, it was Great Britain's strong objection to a French Flanders directly opposite to her coasts that settled the issue, and Belgium attained a freedom never to be violated by any of the guarantors of her neutrality.

Napoleon's "transient yoke" had driven the Germanies to revolt and to the War of Liberation which made him fall. The word "liberty" on which great German writers like Schiller always chimed remained a precious possession of the German students and professors during the dark days of Metternich. It came out fiercely on their lips off and on, and after the fateful year of revolutions (1848), it seemed obvious that Germany would not accept a foreign yoke again. France was still the great danger and with the establishment of the Second Empire and the revival of the Napoleonic legend in the person of his flamboyant nephew, Germany had cause for anxiety and fear. Bismarck played on this fear and obtained through his ruthless and unscrupulous methods the political unity which alone could be a sure protection against the foreign danger.

## “LIBERTY, EQUALITY, FRATERNITY”

The regime of Bismarck or of Kaiser Wilhelm II can hardly be described as being ideal for the cause of liberty. But one cannot deny that by giving Germany a strong united government they had insured her against the risk of losing it again.

In Italy too the Napoleonic episode gave the Italian people the first taste of liberal institutions after long centuries. The Carbonari followed unprofitable methods but they infused courage among the young martyrs. Mazzini's dream of reviving the ancient glory of Rome was decried by his contemporaries but it was he who gave the Italians a strong desire and the will to be free. Cavour and Garibaldi did the rest and in King Victor Emmanuel they found a champion of secular liberty which finally made the Pope yield up his ancient rights and retire into the Vatican. The example of Italy fired the hearts of Bulgar, Rumanian and Yugo-Slav patriots who kept the Great Powers of Europe busy with the Eastern Question which was finally resolved in terms of freedom.

The Great War gave a new impetus to the idea of national freedom not only among the submerged nationalities like the Poles and Czecho-Slovaks in Europe but also in the vast land masses of Asia and Africa. In the inter-war years, the map of Asia was altered almost beyond recognition. The post-war period has been witnessing a similar change in Africa. With the liberation of the African peoples the first item in the gospel of Revolution will have been at least partially completed.

But the history of liberty during the last two centuries revealed some ungainly spots. An ugly fact was that liberty had been interpreted by the less scrupulous as being synonymous with license. They took it for granted that they could do much as they liked so long as they were not checked by powerful rivals or by a superior authority. Within the nation the only superior authority whom they might fear was the state. But during most of the nineteenth century, the state adopted the comfortable doctrine of *laissez-faire* and let the more powerful individuals and groups do practically what they chose. This was possible because the men who governed the state in the name of the people themselves belonged to the exploiting class and found it convenient to shut their eyes while the captains of industry and finance made profit-making their only concern. This has led to the social and economic evils which a later generation has been trying to remedy by curbing the temptations of liberty and appealing to the doctrine of equality. In the international sphere also, the powerful nations backed by their navies and machine guns have been misusing their “liberty” to despoil the less powerful and “backward” peoples of Asia and Africa of their goods and deprive them of their political freedom in the name of empire. Imperialism was still a force when the peace treaties were signed

## MOTHER INDIA

at Versailles ; Japan was the latest member of the club. With the sudden collapse of the Japanese empire after World War II, the old empires too thought it convenient to change their earlier attitudes. The liberty to dominate seems now to be getting out of date.

The misuse of liberty did not go unchallenged in Europe. By the middle of the last century, powerful voices had already begun to be raised against the exploiting classes within the nation, and the Communist Manifesto of Marx and Engels was a first sign-post on the path to equality, as Europe has understood the term. Since that date there has been a whole crop of socialistic thinkers who take their stand on the fundamental right of the individual, and of all individuals in a community, to equal opportunity and as far as possible to an equality of wealth and income. A first recognition of this claim was the facility given by most of the advanced nations to free and compulsory elementary education for all citizens. A subsequent step, taken haltingly and with much deliberation, was the grant of the right to old age benefits to working men. The inter-war years have seen a rapid extension of other benefits to the poorer sections of the population, so that today many of the civilised countries stand committed to the idea that there should be no involuntary unemployment in their midst, none so poor as not to be able to afford the elementary amenities of life, none so rich as to be an eye-sore. But in the process, liberty has suffered a few setbacks which the intellectuals do not know how to remedy. The new gospel has meant the supremacy of the state-idea as the governing principle of national life. Some are still hoping that socialism and state-control—the terms are synonymous—need not necessarily mean the abrogation of democracy and liberty of thought and action.

In the international sphere too, the idea of equality has been accepted, at least in principle. The first great document that upheld the doctrine of equality as between the nations small and big was the Covenant of the League of Nations to which most of the great empires subscribed at the time and others joined later. From the outset however it was clear that in spite of the League the world would for a time at least continue to be governed on the old lines, that is by an oligarchy of Great Powers who had been given a position of supreme eminence even in the councils of the League. But at the same time, the spirit of equality was in the air and the smaller nations had at least to be given a hearing at the deliberations in Geneva, and even the defeated nations could not be annexed downright by the victors : they were to be held in trust for the world at large and their real status camouflaged under the specious scheme of mandates. The United Nations Charter was another long step taken in the right direction. It reaffirmed the principles which had long been forgotten at Geneva and admitted to its membership on equal terms all the

## “LIBERTY, EQUALITY, FRATERNITY”

nations of the world who had fought or at least were opposed in principle to the Axis Powers and were thus to be recognised as “peace-loving” nations. The Security Council still maintains the old tradition of big and small Powers for none could shut one’s eyes to the actualities of the moment. It too provides for “Trust” territories, as the League did for mandates. Nevertheless, the Security Council admits other members from the smaller Powers and they can even preside at its deliberations even though the right of veto might reduce these deliberations to a nullity. The General Assembly which now includes more than eighty member-nations is a forum where all can have their say and the big Powers are known to have canvassed support from the Latin American and Afro-Asian blocs which as individual nations would not count for much in the game of international politics. So long as the decisions are by majority vote and no nation commands more than one vote as in the national parliaments, an elementary first step has been taken towards the ultimate equality of all nations in the domain of international politics. It already exists in theory in the realm of international law.

Fraternity is the next logical step in this line of evolution. But this is the most difficult of all, for it implies a change of heart and cannot come by any other means. The beginnings of this change may perhaps be discerned in the dim recognition that the safety of the world lies in a world-system based on mutual tolerance and harmony and that wars between nations would mean the suicide of the race. There is a growing demand for international cooperation in almost every field of human endeavour, and votaries of a cold war are thinking in terms of coexistence. There are some who even dare to talk of a world-state that would compel the nations to live in harmony and peace, like citizens of a national state. But no state or other mechanical contrivance has ever achieved the fraternity of which the Revolution spoke. “Fraternity is of the soul”, and it will not come until man learns to live in his soul. When he does that, then will true unity reign. It is on the basis of that unity that freedom will be secured for all, harmony will be universal. The Revolutionary gospel of eighteenth-century Europe will find its culmination in the beginnings of a new world.

“The principles of 1789 were not false, but they were falsely stated and selfishly executed. Europe had not the spiritual strength, nor the moral force to carry them out. She was too selfish, too short-sighted, too materialistic and ignorant. She deserved to fail and could not but fail. It is left for Asia and especially for India to reconstruct the world.” (Sri Aurobindo<sup>1</sup>)

SANAT K. BANERJI

<sup>1</sup> *The Karmayogin*, 26th. June, 1909.

## SLEEP YET, YOU MEN

SLEEP, sleep, you men !  
The Messiah you were weeping for  
is come and gone.  
No stars, no cross, no petty miracles  
this time marked his passage to arrest  
the attention of the mob.  
Unannounced he came in the dark, and quietly planted  
the first saplings from the Garden of Eden.  
He brought the future dreamed of old  
and squandered heaven's gold on our Earth.  
He lived and worked among you men  
without ever rousing a suspicion  
of the wondrous work he had undertaken.  
You argued, laughed and mocked him  
or disregarded his talks  
as fabulously impossible propositions,  
and turned over in your dream of contented illusion.  
Sleep, sleep, you men !  
The merciful Lord must be thanked for your complacency.  
Had you any inkling of the work he was doing  
His little hermitage would have been razed to the ground,  
under your million feet trampling,  
scattering to the four winds his life-work and mission.  
Sleep, sleep, you men !  
It is too early yet to erect  
a mausoleum over his tomb,  
or grace the parks with his statues,  
or decorate the walls and ceilings with his portraits.  
Let a few centuries pass by on their way,  
let the din and bustle of the present cool down.  
Sleep yet, you men, who have slept so long,  
the saplings he planted are still very young.

NIRANJAN GUHA ROY

## A WILLING SLAVE

WHAT greater joy is there than to become  
A willing slave surrendered to Thy Will  
And rise beyond the cloud-wrapped ego's dome  
Where Beauty smiles in infinite rapture's thrill.

Thou showest the Path, Thy silent help is there,  
A lucent star in the darkness of the night.  
Subdue, O Mother sweet, the passion's flare,  
The ego's knots that bar the gates of light.

Hearken, O Soul, to the Mother's wondrous call,  
Her puissant cry that burns the wilderness,  
Bathe in Her new world's light that comes to bless;  
Her Image of Love within thy heart instal.

Grant me the Force that bows to Thee alone,  
Creatrix of the universe, O One.

PRITHWI SINGH NAHAR

## BREATH OF GOD

O'ER India when the day is done  
And twilight shadows creep,  
There falls a stillness infinite,  
Solemn-sweet and deep.

The river's flow is soothed and hushed,  
The distant city-cries  
Are quieted with a soft caress  
Till all their discord dies.

The temple-bells are muted soft  
Their tones are vesper-notes  
That fall bewitching on the ear  
And o'er the waters float.

The flickering lamps, like fairy-gold,  
Shine forth to greet the night,  
And far away a lonely voice  
Hymns a pure delight.

A lingering sweetness fills the air  
From mount to desert broad,  
And India lies enraptured by  
The holy breath of God.

GODFREY



## THUS SANG MY SOUL

(28)

### VII. MOTHERING THE BOND OF LOVE : PRAYERS AND PRAISES

*(Continued)*

#### 54. MOTHERING THE BOND OF LOVE

MOTHER, remove all falsehood from my heart.  
Gulfed by surrounding dark inconscience,  
Haunted by fiendish charms and lured by smart  
And self-conceiting self-deceiving sense,

It hopes that in the blaze of light it can  
Still pass off truth-distorting skilled formations  
As symbol-coins of truth. Smite its false plan  
And perforate with light black combinations.

O break, break all attachments from its core,  
Pluck them from very root, so that its seam  
With Thee is closed in, fastened, strengthened more  
And mothered more its bond with Thy Love supreme.

*(To be continued)*

HAR KRISHAN SINGH

## THOUGHTS

O LORD, Thy Darshan thawed me out. There was no desire to salute Thee and yet I was compelled by myself to join hands. There was no desire to be shaped by Thee and yet I was forced from within myself to speak out : Shape me.

I came to sound Thy depths but I was myself sized up.

Thy Darshan turned difficult things facile, things painful into painless. Several doors were flung open in no time, and through them all, O Sachchidananda, Thou didst make Thy way into me.

\*

So long as a jar of unbaked clay is filled with corn only, it serves us well; but as soon as we fill it with water it begins to leak.

Our body behaves in the same manner. So long as it is crammed with humdrum experiences it is perfectly at rest, but no sooner do we start pouring spiritual ichor into it than it begins to ache and writhe. The jar cannot contain that higher ecstasy, so it starts cracking.

Sri Aurobindo is performing the Herculean task of stopping this leakage by baking these earthen jars again and again in the blaze of the spiritual Fire

\*

At a time when I was fagged out because of the effort of draining away darkness, someone gave me a match to set fire to that darkness.

Afterwards to the giver of the match, prostrating before him I offered all the riches I possessed. Yet something within me tells me persistently: You are still his debtor.

I have honestly paid off the balance of many an account; but I cannot clear this debt of a match. I have not yet been able to square this account.

Perhaps, I shall never be able to pay back even a tittle of it.

GIRDHARLAL

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

## THE GRACE OF SRI AUROBINDO AND THE MOTHER\*

*(Continued from the February issue)*

### THE POWER OF PRAYER

It was in May 1958. A doctor friend of mine had to go to Saurashtra leaving his wife and infant daughter about 5 months old. At my place about two furlongs away I was also alone. One morning news was brought to me that someone was ill at my friend's and I was called. This was unusual because unless someone was very seriously ill, I would not be called. When I reached there, I was told by my friend's wife that the child had suddenly developed fever, diarrhoea and continuous vomiting the former night and in spite of a doctor's medicines there was no improvement. The child had been wailing throughout the night and no one could sleep. I went to a doctor who was my friend's friend and got some medicines from him. But there was only a little improvement. I sent a wire to my friend to return.

Now I did not know the child at all, but somehow it was prepared to lie in my lap. I kept my hand on its head remembering Sri Aurobindo and the Mother. The child went to sleep. But the fever went on mounting. I had to put off the child's mother about the temperature. But she could read the signs on the face of the child. Towards evening the temperature went up to 105 degrees; I checked with the thermometer twice. But when the child's mother asked me I told her it was only 102 degrees. But she could see that I was hiding the truth. She got worried and nervous and was fighting to keep tears back from an outsider.

As it was evening time I started to sing my usual Gujarati prayer to Sri Aurobindo composed by an Ashram sadhak-writer. Before that I had read the temperature. It was 105.2 or so. As the prayer went on and on, the child in my lap grew less restless. And at the end I felt the temperature very much lower. On checking with the thermometer I found it to be about 101.5. It was only ten to fifteen minutes in which this miracle had occurred. After some time a few friends and relatives of my doctor-friend came (or my friend himself came, I don't remember). They again prayed. The temperature went further down to 100. The child got well the next day.

*Compiled by* HAR KRISHAN SINGH

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

# SRI AUROBINDO ASHRAM

## FESTIVALS : THE GOLDEN DAY

### INTRODUCTION

As far back as 1904, which was a leap year, Sri Aurobindo long before he arrived in Pondicherry, had declared in *Bhavani Mandir* : "India must send forth from herself the future religion of the entire world."

In the weekly *Bandemataram*, dated 12-4-1908, we come across the passage :

"...To realise that ideal, to impart it to the world is the mission of India. She has evolved a religion which embraces all that the heart, the brain, the practical faculty of man can desire but she has not yet applied it to the problems of modern politics. This therefore is the work which she has still to do before she can help humanity."

But how was India's mission to be achieved ? Sri Aurobindo saw the possibility in the coming down of the *paramā prakṛti* in the form of the Mother, as it is only her power of Supermind that can "divinise the clay" and "translate heaven into human shapes":

Earth must transform herself and equal heaven,  
Or heaven descend upon earth's mortal state.                    (*Savitri*)

The Mother adds about the Supermind : "I do not, however, mean to say that the whole world will at once feel its presence or be transformed ; but I do mean that a part of humanity will know and participate in its descent—say, this little world of ours here. From there the transfiguring Grace will most effectively radiate."<sup>1</sup>

There was a general expectation that something special was in store for the Darshan of the 24th April 1956. An unusually large number of visitors was present under the Balcony on 23-4-56 because of the succession of five natural numbers involved in that date.

<sup>1</sup> *Words of the Mother, Series 3.*

On the 24th April, for the first time the Mother declared about the event that had secretly taken place on the 29th February of the same year.

“The manifestation of the supramental upon earth is no more a promise but a living fact, a reality.

“It is at work here, and one day will come when the most blind, the most unconscious, even the most unwilling shall be obliged to recognise it.”

The same evening we received the *Bulletin* containing the above message with a modification of the message of the 29th March 1956 which was an extract from the Mother’s *Prayers and Meditations*, addressed to the Supreme Shakti. The message had run :

“The Lord has willed and Thou dost execute :  
A new light shall break upon the earth,  
A new world shall be born,  
And the things that were announced shall be fulfilled.”

A copy of this was given to each of us, along with a portrait of the Hiranmaya Purusha. The *Bulletin* of the 24th April 1956 contains the following modification :

“29 FEBRUARY—29 MARCH

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.”

Notice the change from the future to the present tense. The Mother made the change immediately after she had distributed the message on 29th March : she asked the Secretary for a copy of it and made the necessary alteration. A few sadhaks who were near her had also their copies changed by her.

This year on the 29th February the Mother disclosed to us in the following words exactly what had happened during the common meditation on Wednesday, the 29th February 1956. She gave us a passage from her own diary of experiences and realisations :

“This evening the Divine Presence, concrete and material, was there present amongst you. I had a form of living gold, bigger than the universe

## MOTHER INDIA

and I was facing a huge and massive golden door which separated the world from the Divine. As I looked at the door, I knew and willed, in a single movement of consciousness, that “the time has come,” and lifting with both hands a mighty golden hammer I struck one blow, one single blow on the door and the door was shattered to pieces.

“Then the supramental Light and Force and Consciousness rushed down upon earth in an uninterrupted flow.”

This reminds us of the 15th mantra of the Isha Upanishad as translated by Sri Aurobindo :

“The Face of Truth is covered with a brilliant golden lid ; that do thou remove, O Fosterer, for the law of the Truth, for sight.”

Sri Aurobindo goes on to explain the significance of the word “Fosterer” :

“In the inner sense of the Veda Surya, the Sun-God, represents the divine Illumination of the Kavi which exceeds mind and forms the pure, self-luminous Truth of things...

“He is the Fosterer or Increaser, for he enlarges and opens man’s dark and limited being into a luminous and infinite consciousness... His rays are the thoughts that proceed luminously from the Truth, the Vast, but become deflected and disordered in the reflecting and dividing principle, Mind. They form there the golden lid which covers the face of the Truth...”

In his New Gayatri mantra, Sri Aurobindo places the Mother as the Devata of the mantra, where the original Gayatri mantra had placed the Sun or the Fosterer.

The original Gayatri read :

ॐ तत्सवितुर्वरेण्यं भर्गो देवस्य धीमहि । धियो यो न प्रचोदयात् ॥

*Tat savitur varenyam bhargo devasya dhimahi,  
Dhiyo yo nah pracodayat.*

“We meditate upon that excellent splendour of the Lord Savitṛ. May he activate our thoughts.”

Compare Sri Aurobindo’s version :

ॐ तत्सवितुर्वर रूप ज्योतिः परस्य धीमहि । यन्न सत्येन दीपयेत् ॥

*Tat savitur varam rūpam jyotiḥ parasya dhīmahī  
yamaḥ satyena dīpayet.*

“Let us meditate on the most auspicious (best) form of Savitri, on the Light of the Supreme which shall illumine us with the Truth.”<sup>1</sup>

This was distributed by the Mother on Saraswati Puja Day, the 2nd February 1960.

On the 21st the Mother gave everyone a card in a special envelope showing a pair of golden swans as heralds of the Supramental World. They had appeared in 1956 in a vision to the painter, Promode Kumar Chattopadhyaya.

On the 29th there was to be the first anniversary of the Day of the Supramental Manifestation—the first anniversary because this date can be observed only in Leap Years. It has been aptly named the Golden Day.

Throughout the week every evening there was meditation at the Playground, after tape recordings of the Mother’s talks or her music or some recitation had been played.

Then the great day came. The Mother distributed 2517 golden symbols, of which the obverse has twelve rays indicating the Supramental Manifestation with Sri Aurobindo’s lotus in the centre ; and the reverse has the Mother’s symbol in the middle with the date 29-2-56 at the top and 29-2-60 at the bottom.

There is a change in Sri Aurobindo’s symbols on the medals. The two triangles, in the middle of which the square containing the lotus is usually put, are absent and in their place there are the Sun’s rays spreading out from the square. On being asked for the reason of this change the Mother said :

“I never intended to give Sri Aurobindo’s symbol.

The design on the medal signifies—the twelve rays of the new creation issue from the manifestation of the Avatar :

lotus—Avatar  
square—manifestation  
12 rays—new creation.

23-3-60”

That day the Ashram put on a look of all gold. The balcony where the Mother appears at 6-15 a.m. was covered with gold satin which had a Supramental-Manifestation flower embroidered on it. Visitors from all over India and abroad came to Pondicherry for the Golden Day. The

<sup>1</sup> Sri Aurobindo’s own translation.

## MOTHER INDIA

women were in saris with golden borders, which they had received from the Mother herself a fortnight earlier.

Music is God's own gift to man to help him to attune himself to a higher plane of consciousness. The Mother played her music at 10 a.m. for half an hour on a new organ offered by one of her American devotees. One sadhak had the inner experience that the music brought down a veritable shower of golden dew from above. Another listener, a retired District Judge, then present in the Ashram, had a vision of Sri Krishna dancing in the Mother's room and when it was referred to the Mother her answer was "Yes".

To accommodate our guests in the Ashram, school children and teachers were seated in the School, where the music was relayed by microphones. A young visitor, when he found 2,000 persons sitting in the Ashram in pin-drop silence, remarked that one had to make no effort to meditate there but the atmosphere itself poured meditation into one's soul.

The chief event of the Golden Day started at 4 p.m. when the Mother began to distribute the golden symbols. As soon as one entered the Ashram one was greeted with flowers of various golden hues. The "Service" tree above the Samadhi and other plants were illuminated with little bulbs of gold and other colours. The Mother, clad in a golden sari which had taken a full year to be embroidered, was seated in a golden chair covered with orange silk in the Meditation Hall (of which the walls were also covered with orange silk). The dome was specially made of aluminium sheets so as to reflect the golden rays of tube-lights. The distribution lasted till 5.30 p.m. While returning from Darshan we saw an announcement in the Mother's own handwriting in French and in English, put up on a board :

### The Golden Day

Henceforth the 29th February will be the day of the Lord.

With the evening meal plastic bottles with golden tops were distributed, each containing five ounces of fresh honey, reminding one of the nectar given to the gods for their immortality. The Day's programme ended with a showing, at the Playground, of coloured slides of the Mother in her private chamber. "Radiant," "illuminating" were the words on the lips of the sadhaks after seeing the show. A visitor, who had no knowledge of the Mother or any interest in spirituality, happened to see the slides, and said at the end : "Who was the lady ? She appeared to me to be a goddess of 25 years."

The celebration of the Golden Day surpassed all previous festivities, though each had possessed its own importance and significance. The grandeur with which the Mother's 80th birthday had been celebrated two years ago was indeed



unique, but that was the expression of our gratitude for all that she had done for us. She had already told us in 1958 :<sup>1</sup>

“By the very fact that you live upon earth at this moment—whether you are conscious of it or not and even whether you wish it or not—you absorb with the air that you breathe this new supramental substance which is spreading in earth’s atmosphere and it is preparing in you things that will manifest all on a sudden, as soon as you have taken the decisive step.”

Now the Transcendental Mother appeared before us to bestow upon us the gift of the New Birth. This was the work for which Sri Aurobindo had lived and laid down his life. Soon after his passing away, the Mother had declared to a sadhak :

“About a year ago, while I was discussing things, I remarked that I felt like leaving this body of mine. He spoke out in a very firm tone, ‘No, this can never be. If necessary for this transformation, I might go, you will have to fulfil our Yoga of supramental descent and transformation.’”

A glimpse of the unerring foresight with which the Mother and the Master have worked to achieve this end may be had from the booklet *Towards February 29* which contains the Mother’s utterances since 1930, published a few days after the celebration.

Apropos of February 29, 1956 it has been said that it took the Mother 30 years to make the Supermind manifest. What these 30 years mean may be gauged from the fact that her work and Sri Aurobindo’s has been a challenge to all Nature and signifies the turning of the whole stream of the evolution to a new channel. We may recall the following lines from Sri Aurobindo, when he was asked whether the work would be accomplished after even 30 years :

“Considering that by ordinary evolution it could not have been done even at Nature’s express speed in less than 3000 years, and would ordinarily have taken anything from 30000 to 3000000 the transit of 30 years is perhaps not too slow.”

The greatness of the Golden Day lies in the glimpse which the Mother has given us of the New World, which the mind cannot explain and the pen cannot describe. She has taken the human form in order that we who are made

<sup>1</sup> *Bulletin of Physical Education*, November 1958, p. 97.

## MOTHER INDIA

of clay may turn into gold. Each one of us according to his capacity of receptivity foreglumpled on that day what it was to be turned into gold. For years we had dreamt about the Golden Age. On this day her presence among us gave substance to that dream and blessed all those who were witnesses to this event of world-wide importance. As time rolls on and the manifestation of the Supermind becomes more and more evident, this festival will fully shine out and all humanity, transported with joy, will commemorate it.

May the world sing with the Prophet of Supermind :

The Iron Age is ended. Only now  
The last fierce spasm of the dying past  
Shall shake the nations, and when that has passed,  
Earth washed of ills shall raise a fairer brow.<sup>1</sup>

NARAYANPRASAD

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

<sup>1</sup> *Collected Poems and Plays*, Vol. I, p. 170.

## BOOKS IN THE BALANCE

**Bachhonki Kala or Shiksha** By *Devi Prasad*. Published by "Akhil Bharat Sarva-Seva Sangh Prakashan", Rajghat, Kashi. Price Rs. 8.

This is a welcome book on art as a subject of child-education. All our educational systems have neglected aesthetics and the general stress on technology to-day tends to neglect the humanities in general and art in particular from the curricula.

Sj. Devi Prasad's book is the result not of some theory but of the practical process of education based on art. In certain cities like Bombay and Delhi there are institutions for child education where similar effort is being made. Particular mention may be made of the Happy School in Delhi and of the work of Sm. Bhakti Ben Shah in Bombay.

The book is bound to be of very great interest to all teachers as it helps the growth of the child's psychology through art. The first chapter making a case for art as a subject for education is a very cogently worked out thesis. So also chapter seventh dealing with the method of teaching art is of importance. The ninth chapter gives some questions and answers which furnish very useful materials to those who seek intellectual satisfaction before they accept the working basis of Sj. Devi Prasad.

There is a short introduction by Mr. Zakir Husain.

It may be of value to all those concerned with child-education to know that Sir Herbert Read, an eminent art critic, has written a book, *Education for Peace*, in which he has shown the need for basing education on art—because art would prepare the mind of the future citizen for an outlook in which peace would be ensured as he would grow up to a sense of unity of mankind.

Sj. Devi Prasad's book is an earnest effort in the right direction and all educational institutions would be well advised to have a copy of it so that the teachers may be able to widen their outlook on education.

A. B. PURANI

# Students' Section

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## RÉPONSES — ANSWERS

*Q. Douce Mère, est-ce que c'est possible d'avoir une conception correcte du Divin ?*

*Q. Sweet Mother, is it possible to have a correct conception of the Divine ?*

R. Aucune conception du Divin ne peut être correcte; car les conceptions sont des activités mentales, et nulle activité mentale n'est apte à manifester le Divin.

C'est seulement par expérience qu'on peut Le connaître et l'expérience ne peut pas se traduire en mots.

A. No conception of the Divine can be correct; for the conceptions are mental activities, and no mental activity is fit to manifest the Divine.

It is only by experience that one can know Him and experience cannot be translated into words.

20-6-1960

THE MOTHER

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*Q. Douce Mère, quelles sont "les différentes divisions psychologiques de l'être humain" ?*

*Q. Sweet Mother, what are "the different psychological divisions of the human being" ?*

R. Ces divisions sont seulement arbitraires. Elles ont été fixées dans le but de faciliter l'étude de la nature humaine, et surtout pour constituer une base définie pour les diverses méthodes de développement et de discipline de soi. C'est pourquoi chaque système philosophique, éducatif ou Yogique a, pour ainsi dire, sa propre division basée sur l'expérience de son fondateur.

RÉPONSES—ANSWERS

Pourtant, malgré ces divergences, il y a une sorte de tradition qui, derrière les termes différents, crée une analogie essentielle. Cette analogie peut être exprimée par une quaternaire : le physique, le vital, le mental et le psychique, ou âme.

Sri Aurobindo a écrit sur ce sujet en grands détails, dans certaines de ses lettres, dans *La Synthèse des Yogas* et dans *Les Essais sur la Guîta*.

A. These divisions are only arbitrary. They have been fixed with the aim of facilitating the study of human nature, and above all in order to constitute a definite basis for the diverse methods of development and self-discipline. That is why each system philosophical, educational or Yogic has, so to speak, its own division based on the experience of its founder. However, in spite of these divergences, there is a sort of tradition which, behind the different terms, creates an essential analogy. This analogy may be expressed by a quaternary: the physical, the vital, the mental and the psychic or soul.

Sri Aurobindo has written on this subject in great detail, in some of his letters, in *The Synthesis of Yoga* and in *Essays on the Gita*.

30-5-1960

THE MOTHER

*Q. Douce Mère, Sri Aurobindo parle "d'un nœud central de désirs qu'il faut couper". Comment peut-on le faire, d'où commencer?*

*Q. Sweet Mother, Sri Aurobindo speaks of "the central knot of desires which should be cut". How can one do it, and where should one start?*

R. Le nœud central des désirs c'est le sens de la personnalité séparée, c'est l'ego. Avec la disparition de l'ego, les désirs disparaissent.

A. The central knot of desires is the sense of separate personality, it is the ego. With the disappearance of the ego, the desires disappear.

13-6-1960

THE MOTHER

*Q. Douce Mère, Tu as dit un jour en classe avec tes mains largement ouvertes de te donner tout, même nos défauts et nos vices, et toute boue de chez nous. Est-ce la seule manière de les éliminer, et comment peut-on le faire?*

*Q. Sweet Mother, You said one day in class with your hands wide open that we should give you everything, even our defects and our vices, and all the dirt in us. Is this the only way to get rid of them, and how is one to do it?*

R. On garde ses défauts, parce qu'on s'y cramponne comme à quelque chose de précieux ; on tient à ses vices comme on tient à une partie de son corps, et arracher une mauvaise habitude fait aussi mal que de s'arracher une dent. Voilà pourquoi on ne progresse pas.

Tandis que si on fait généreusement l'offrande de son défaut, de son vice ou de la mauvaise habitude, alors on a la joie de faire une offrande et, en échange, on reçoit la force de remplacer ce qui a été donné, par une vibration meilleure et plus vraie.

A. One keeps one's defects, because one holds fast to them as to something precious ; one clings to one's vices as one clings to a part of one's body, and to pull out a bad habit gives as much pain as pulling out a tooth. There's the reason why one does not progress.

Whereas if one generously makes the offering of one's defect, one's vice or the bad habit, then one has the joy of making an offering and, in exchange, one receives the force to replace what has been given, by a finer and truer vibration.

3-7-1960

THE MOTHER

*Q. Douce Mère, il arrive que quand on T'aime profondément et qu'on est en rapport intime avec Toi, on a plutôt l'impression que le Divin appartient à nous "exclusivement" (et non pas que nous appartenons à Lui). Comment ?*

*Q. Sweet Mother, it happens that when one loves You deeply and is in intimate contact with You, one has rather the impression that the Divine belongs to us "exclusively" (and not that we belong to Him). How ?*

R. Les deux sont également vrais et devraient être sentis simultanément. Mais l'égoïsme humain a toujours tendance à prendre plutôt qu'à donner. C'est de là que vient cette impression.

A. The two are equally true and ought to be felt simultaneously. But human egoism has always the tendency to take rather than to give. It is from there that comes this impression.

3-7-1960

THE MOTHER

*Q. Douce Mère, c'est beaucoup plus facile pour moi de T'approcher que d'approcher Sri Aurobindo. Pourquoi ? Tu es tout ce que Sri Aurobindo est pour nous,*

*de plus une Mère Divine et tendre. Alors faut-il essayer d'établir la même relation avec lui?*

*Q. Sweet Mother, it is much more easy for me to approach You than to approach Sri Aurobindo. Why? You are all that Sri Aurobindo is for us, in addition a Mother Divine and tender. Is it then necessary to establish the same relation with him?*

R. Tu réponds toi-même à ta propre question. Je suis pour vous une mère toute proche de vous, qui vous aime et vous comprends, c'est pourquoi il vous est facile de vous approcher de moi dans une tendre confiance, sans crainte et sans hésitation. Sri Aurobindo est toujours là pour vous aider et vous guider mais il est naturel que vous vous approchez de Lui avec la révérence que l'on a pour le Maître du Yoga.

A. You yourself have answered your own question. I am for you a mother quite close to you, who loves and understands you : that is why it is easy for you to approach me with a tender confidence, without fear and without hesitation. Sri Aurobindo is always there to help you and guide you; but it is natural that you should approach him with the reverence due to the Master of Yoga.

14-7-1960

THE MOTHER

*Q. Douce Mère, qu'est-ce que l'âme ou l'être psychique exactement? et que veut dire l'évolution de l'être psychique? Quelle est sa relation avec le Suprême?*

*Q. Sweet Mother, what exactly is the soul or the psychic being? and what is meant by the evolution of the psychic being? What is its relation to the Supreme?*

R. L'âme et l'être psychique ne sont pas exactement la même chose, quoique leur essence soit la même.

L'âme est cette étincelle divine qui se trouve au centre de tout être; elle est identique à son Origine Divine; c'est le divin dans l'humain.

L'être psychique se forme progressivement autour de ce centre divin, l'âme, au cours de ses innombrables existences dans l'évolution terrestre; jusqu'au moment où l'être psychique pleinement formé et totalement éveillé, devient le revêtement conscient de l'âme autour de laquelle il et s'est formé.

Et identifié ainsi au Divin, il devient son instrument parfait dans le monde.

A. The soul and the psychic being are not exactly the same thing, although their essence is the same.

## MOTHER INDIA

The soul is this divine spark that dwells at the centre of each being; it is identical with its Divine Origin; it is the divine in the human.

The psychic being forms itself progressively round this divine centre, the soul, in the course of its innumerable existences in the earthly evolution; up to the moment when the psychic being, fully and wholly awakened, becomes the conscious vesture of the soul round which it is formed.

Identified thus with the Divine, it becomes His perfect instrument in the world.

14-7-1960

THE MOTHER

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*Q. Douce Mère, Tu as dit qu'une fois qu'on a trouvé son être psychique on ne peut jamais le perdre, n'est-ce pas? Mais on 'peut' faire un contact avec lui quand on est réceptif, de temps en temps?*

*Q. Sweet Mother, You have said that once we have found our psychic being we can never lose it. Isn't that so? But can we have a contact with it when we are receptive, from time to time?*

R. Quand on a établi le contact avec son être psychique, c'est, en effet, définitif.

Mais avant que ce contact soit établi, on peut, dans certaines circonstances, recevoir consciemment l'*influence* psychique; ce qui crée toujours une illumination dans l'être et a des effets plus ou moins durables.

A. When you have established the contact with your psychic being, it is, in effect, definitive.

But before this contact is established, you can, under certain circumstances, receive consciously the psychic *influence*—that which always creates an illumination in the being and has more or less lasting effects.

14-7-1960

THE MOTHER



## TALKS OF THE MOTHER

*Q. Tu as dit que "pour aller à l'endroit où sont enregistrés et conservés tous les mouvements du mental appartenant à la vie terrestre, il faut faire taire les bruits du mental physique ou matériel...et arrêter les mouvements ordinaires de la pensée."*

*Mais on ne peut pas arrêter les mouvements. On a du travail à faire. A deux heures il faut faire ceci et à dix heures et demie cela; si on oublie...*

*Q. You have said that "to go to the right place where are recorded and preserved all the movements of the mind belonging to the earthly life, it is necessary to silence the noises of the physical or material mind...and stop the ordinary movements of thought."*

*But we cannot stop the movements. There is work to be done. At two o' clock, we must do this and, at half past ten, that; if we forget...*

R. Non, tu ne comprends pas. Il faut arrêter tous les mouvements juste à ce moment-là. Pas d'une façon permanente. Au moment d'aller dans ce domaine, il faut pouvoir faire le silence complet dans le mental, et toutes les autres choses que j'ai dites, mais juste pour y aller. Par exemple, tu décides : "Maintenant, je vais aller lire tel chapitre de l'histoire terrestre", alors tu te mets confortablement dans une chaise longue, tu demandes aux gens de ne pas te déranger, tu t'intériorises, tu arrêtes complètement ta pensée, et tu envoies ton messenger mental dans cet endroit-là. Il est préférable de connaître quelqu'un qui puisse t'y conduire, parce que, autrement, tu pourrais te tromper de chemin et aller ailleurs. Alors tu vas. C'est comme une très vaste bibliothèque, avec un tas de petits compartiments. Et tu trouves le compartiment qui correspond à la connaissance que tu veux avoir. Tu presses un bouton et ça s'ouvre. Et là-dedans, tu trouves comme un rouleau, une formation mentale qui se déroule devant toi comme un parchemin, et tu lis. Alors tu notes ce que tu as lu, puis tu reviens tranquillement dans ton corps, avec ta connaissance nouvelle, et tu traduis physiquement, si tu le peux, ce que tu as trouvé, puis tu te lèves et tu recommences ta vie comme avant. Ça peut te prendre dix minutes, ça peut te prendre une heure, ou une demi heure, cela dépend de tes capacités, mais il est important de savoir le chemin, pour ne pas se tromper.

A. No, you don't understand. You must stop all the movements just at that very moment. Not permanently. At the moment of going into this domain, it is

necessary to make a complete silence in the mind, and all the other things I have said, but just for getting there. For example, you decide : "Now, I am going to read such and such a chapter of earth-history", then you make yourself comfortable in an easy-chair, you ask people not to disturb you, you go inward, stop your thinking completely and send your mental messenger into that domain. It is preferable to know somebody who can lead you there, because otherwise you could miss your way and reach elsewhere. Then you get going. It is like a huge library, with a set of small compartments. And you find the compartment which corresponds to the knowledge you are out to have. You press a button and it flies open. And, there inside, you find something like a scroll, a mental formation which unrolls itself before you like a parchment, and you read. Then you note what you have read, get back quietly into your body, with your new knowledge, and translate physically if you can what you have found; then you get up and start again your life as before. This can take you ten minutes, it can take you an hour, or half an hour—all depends on your capacities, but it is important to know the way, in order not to go astray.

*Q. Alors pourquoi ne pas faire cela, tout simplement, au lieu de lire des livres et tout le reste ?*

*Q. So why not simply do this instead of reading books and all the rest ?*

R. Parce qu'il y a très peu de gens qui pourraient le faire, tandis qu'il y en a beaucoup qui peuvent lire des livres. Il n'y en a pas beaucoup qui les comprennent, mais beaucoup peuvent les lire. Et cela, c'est encore plus difficile que de comprendre un livre.

A. Because there are very few people who can do it, while there are many who can read books. Not many can understand them, but all can read. And this is still more difficult than to understand books.

*Q. Mais si l'on apprend quand on est tout petit ?*

*Q. But if one learns when one is quite small ?*

R. Peut-être que cela remplacerait avantageusement la lecture des livres. Car c'est exactement tout ce qui s'est passé sur la terre, depuis le commencement jusqu'à maintenant : tous les mouvements du mental sont inscrits, tous. Alors, quand tu as besoin d'un renseignement précis sur quelque chose, tu n'as qu'à aller là, tu trouves ton chemin. C'est un endroit très curieux; c'est

fait comme des petites cellules, avec des rayons et des sortes de, comment dire...il y a des bibliothèques qui sont comme cela. Tiens, j'ai vu la photographie que l'on nous a montrée au cinéma, c'était l'image d'une bibliothèque, à New York. Eh bien, c'est un peu comme cela. J'avais été intéressée à cause de cela. Mais au lieu d'être des livres, c'est comme des petits carrés. C'est tout fermé, alors on met son doigt, on presse sur un bouton et ça s'ouvre. Puis il y a comme un rouleau qui sort; on ouvre et on peut lire, tout, tout ce qui est écrit dessus à propos de tel ou tel sujet. Il y en a des millions, et des millions, et des millions. Et heureusement, avec le mental, on peut aller en bas ou en haut ou n'importe où. On n'a pas besoin d'échelle !

A. Perhaps that would profitably replace the reading of books. For here is exactly all that has happened on the earth since the beginning up to now : all the movements of the mind are inscribed, all. So, when you need any precise information on anything, you have only to go there, you find your way. It is a very curious place; it is built like small cells, with shelves and kinds of, what shall I say ?...there are libraries which are like that. Well, I have seen the photograph which was shown us in the cinema, it is the picture of a library at New York. Oh yes, it is a little like that. I was interested because of it. But in place of being books, it is like small squares. It is all shut, then you put your finger, you press a button and it opens up. Then there is a scroll that comes out; you open and you can read, all, everything that is written on it in relation to such and such a subject. There are millions of them, and millions, and millions. And luckily, with the mind you can go up and down and anywhere whatever. You don't need a ladder !

*Q. Comment lit-on ? Comme on lit dans les livres ?*

*Q. How does one read ? Just as one reads books ?*

R. Oui. C'est une sorte de perception mentale. On voit très, très bien. Toute la description, ou le renseignement. Cela dépend de ce que c'est. Quelquefois ce sont des images. C'est comme une image qui est gardée. Quelquefois c'est un récit. Quelquefois c'est simplement une réponse à une question. On y trouve les choses possibles et imaginables qui ont été enregistrées mentalement. On peut faire beaucoup de rectifications, et justement rectifier les choses qui ont été mises dans les livres et qui ne sont pas correctes. Et on n'a pas besoin de marcher, de monter, de descendre : on envoie tout simplement une conscience mentale concentrée, et qui se promène. Alors elle touche ça. Seulement, si en le faisant on n'est pas complètement détaché du fonctionne-

ment de son propre cerveau, je soupçonne que l'on doit voir ce que l'on a dans sa propre tête. Au lieu de voir la chose telle qu'elle est, peut-être que l'on fait une promenade dans son cerveau et on voit les choses qui s'y trouvent. C'est un danger. Il faut pouvoir faire taire absolument sa tête et être complètement détaché; si par exemple, tu cherches la solution d'un problème, il ne faut pas avoir déjà dans ta tête la solution qui te paraît être vraie, ou meilleure, ou profitable. Il faut être absolument comme une feuille blanche, sans rien. Et on va, comme ça, avec une très sincère aspiration pour savoir ce qui est vrai, et sans postuler à l'avance que ce sera comme ceci ou comme cela, parce que autrement on ne verra que sa propre formation. La première condition c'est donc que la tête se taise complètement, pendant le temps où l'on voit.

Et pour être tout à fait sûr de rapporter clairement la connaissance reçue, sans rien déformer, il vaut mieux dire ce que l'on voit et ce qu'on lit (ou ce qu'on perçoit plutôt, car on ne lit pas vraiment), le dire au fur et à mesure qu'on le perçoit, et que ce soit quelqu'un d'autre qui écrive. Mais pour cela, il faut être tout à fait dressé, il faut avoir une éducation très bien faite. Je répète. Tu es tranquillement étendu sur ta chaise longue, immobile et tout à fait tranquille, et tu envoies un messenger de ta tête. Quelqu'un est assis à côté de toi, et quand tu arrives à l'endroit et que tu as ouvert la porte et que tu tires le manuscrit (ou appelle cela comme tu veux), alors tu commences à parler, à exprimer ce que tu vois, au lieu de lire seulement avec tes yeux qui sont partis. Tu prends l'habitude de parler, et à mesure que tu perçois là-bas, tu parles ici. Tu te racontes justement ton voyage au milieu de ces salles immenses, et que tu es arrivé à cet endroit, et que cet endroit avait la petite marque qui était le signe de ce que tu voulais voir. Alors tu ouvres et tu sors ce rouleau et tu commences à lire. Et tu le lis à haute voix. Et la personne qui est là, assise à côté de toi, note au fur et à mesure ce que tu lis. Comme cela, il n'y a pas de danger que ce soit changé quand tu reviens, parce que la partie de ton être qui est là, au moment de l'expérience, voit d'une façon très claire et très précise. Mais quand on revient dans le monde matériel tel qu'il est, il y a quelque chose qui échappe presque toujours, et qui n'échappe pas quand on parle directement au moment où l'on travaille. Tout cela, ce sont beaucoup de conditions à remplir; ce n'est pas si facile que de prendre un livre à la bibliothèque et de le lire. Ça, c'est à la portée de tout le monde. L'autre chose est un petit peu plus difficile à réaliser.

A. Yes. It is a sort of mental perception. One sees very, very well. All the description, or the information. It depends on what's there. Sometimes there are images. It is like an image that is kept. Sometimes it is a narrative. Sometimes it is simply an answer to a question. You find there all possible

## TALKS OF THE MOTHER

and imaginable things which have been mentally recorded. You can make a lot of corrections, and justifiably emend things which have been put in the books and which are mistaken. And you don't need to walk, to climb, to come down : you quite simply send a concentrated mental consciousness which moves about. Then it touches this. Only, if while doing so you are not completely detached from the functionings of your brain I suspect that you will see what you have in your own head. Instead of seeing the thing as it is, perhaps you will take a stroll through your brain and see the things found there. This is a danger. You must keep your head absolutely silent and be completely detached; if, for example, you are looking for the solution of a problem, you must not have already in your head the solution which seems to you true, or better, or profitable. You must be absolutely like a blank sheet, without anything. And you go, like that, with a very sincere aspiration to know what is true, and without postulating in advance that it would be like this or like that, because otherwise you see only your own formation. The first condition is thus that the head should be completely silent, during the time you are seeing.

And in order to be altogether sure of bringing back clearly the knowledge received, without deforming anything, it would be better to say what you see and what you read (or rather what you perceive, for one does not really read), say it gradually as the perceiving goes on, and someone else should write down. But for that one should be quite trained, have an education very well done. I repeat. You are quietly stretched out in your easy-chair, immobile and utterly quiet, and you send a messenger from your head. Someone is seated next to you, and when you reach the place and you have opened the door and are reading the manuscript (or whatever you like to call it) then you start speaking, expressing what you see, instead of merely reading with your eyes which have gone out there. You make a habit of speaking and, according as you perceive there, you speak here. You recount to yourself exactly your passage in the midst of those immense halls and that you have reached this place, and that this place had the little mark which is the sign of what you wanted to see. Then you open and take out the scroll and start reading. And you read it aloud. And the person, who is seated beside you, notes down as you go on reading. Like this, there is no danger that it will be changed when you come back, because the part of your being which is there, at the moment of the experience, sees very clearly and precisely. But when one comes back to the material world as it is, there is something that almost always escapes, and it does not escape when one tells directly at the moment of the work. All these things, they are a lot of conditions to fulfil; it is not so easy as taking a book at the library and reading it. That is within the reach of everybody. This is a little bit more hard to achieve.

30-9-1953

## THE GOLDEN BIRD

SRI AUROBINDO

It was in the forests of Asan that the Golden Bird first flew out from a flower-besieged thicket and fluttered before the dazzled eyes of Luilla. It was in the forests of Asan,—the open and impenetrable, the haunt of the dancers and untrodden of human feet, coiling place of the cobra and the Python, lair of the lion and jaguar, formidable retreat of the fleeing antelope, yet the green home of human safety where a man and a maiden could walk in the moonlit night and hear unconcerned the far-off broil of the Kings of the wilderness. It was into the friendly and open places that the golden bird fluttered, but it came no less from the coverts of dread and mystery. From the death and the night it flew out into the sunlight where Luilla was happily straying.

Luilla loved to wander on the verges of danger, just where those flower-besieged thickets began and formed for miles together a thorny and tangled rampart full at once of allurement and menace. She did not venture in, for she had a great fear of the thorns and brambles and a high respect for her radiant beauty, her own constant object of worship and the daily delight of all who dwelt for a while on earth labouring the easy and kindly soil on the verges of the forests of Asan. But always she wandered close to the flowery wall and her mind, safe in its voluntary incorporeality, strayed like a many-hued butterfly, far into the forbidden region which the gods had so carefully secluded. Perhaps secretly she hoped that some day some kingly and leonine head would thrust itself out through the flowers and compel her with a gaze of friendly and majestic invitation or else that the green poisonous head of a serpent reposing itself on a flower would scrutinise her out of narrow eyes and express a cunning approval of her beauty. It was not out of fear of the lions and the serpents that Luilla forbore to enter the secret places. She knew she could overcome the most ferocious intentions of any destroyer in the world, firm-footed or footless, if only he would give her three minutes before making up his mind to eat or bite her. But neither lion nor serpent strayed out of these appointed haunts. It was the golden bird that first fluttered out from the thickets to Luilla.

Luilla looked at it as it flitted from bough to bough, and her eyes were dazzled and her soul wondered. For the little body of the bird was an inconstant flame of flying and fleeting gold and the wings that opened and fluttered

## THE GOLDEN BIRD

were of living gold and the small shapely head was crested gold and the long graceful quivering tail was trailing feathered gold; all was gold about the bird, except the eyes and they were two jewels of a soft ever-changing colour and sheltered strange-looking depths of love and thought in their gentle brilliance. On the bough where it perched, it seemed as if all the soft-shaded leaves were suddenly sunlit. For as Luilla accustomed her eyes to the flickering brightness of the golden bird, it hovered at last on a branch, settled and sang. And its voice also was of gold.

The bird sang in its own high secret language; but Luilla's ear understood its thoughts and in Luilla's soul as it thirsted and listened and trembled with delight, the song shaped itself easily into human speech. This then was what the bird sang—the bird that came out of the Death's night sang to Luilla a song of beauty and of delight :

“Luilla ! Luilla ! Luilla ! green and beautiful are the meadows where the children run and pluck the flowers and green and beautiful the pastures where the calm-eyed cattle graze, green and beautiful the cornfields ripening on the village bounds, but greener are the impenetrable thickets of Asan than her open places of life, and more beautiful than the meadows and the pastures and the cornfields are the forests of death and night. More ensnaring to some is the danger of the jaguar than the attractive face of a child, more welcome the foot-tracks of the lion as it haunts the pastures of the cattle, more fair and fruitful the thorn and the wild briar than the fields full of ripening grain. And this I know that no such flowers bloom in the safety and ease of Asan's meadows, though they make a thick and divine treading for luxurious feet, as I have seen blooming on the borders of the wild morass, in the heart of the bramble thicket and over the mouth of the serpent's lair. Shall I not take thee, O Luilla ! into those woods ? Thou shalt pluck the flowers in the forests of night and death, thou shalt lay thy hands on the lion's mane.

O Luilla ! O Luilla ! O Luilla !”

*(First published in 'Advent', August 1952)*

## TALKS ON POETRY

### TALK NINETEEN

*(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.)*

WE have done our brief best with what I have called the mystical metaphysics and psychology of Sri Aurobindo's *Rose of God*. Let us try to sum them up on our way to the sheer poetry of the piece. Hold before yourselves the poem again :

Rose of God, vermilion stain on the sapphires of heaven,  
Rose of Bliss, fire-sweet, seven-tinged with the ecstasies seven !  
Leap up in our heart of humanhood, O miracle, O flame,  
Passion-flower of the Nameless, bud of the mystical Name.

Rose of God, great wisdom-bloom on the summits of being,  
Rose of Light, immaculate core of the ultimate seeing !  
Live in the mind of our earthhood : O golden mystery, flower,  
Sun on the head of the Timeless, guest of the marvellous Hour.

Rose of God, damask force of Infinity, red icon of might,  
Rose of Power with thy diamond halo piercing the night !  
Ablaze in the will of the mortal, design the wonder of thy plan,  
Image of Immortality, outbreak of the Godhead in man.

Rose of God, smitten purple with the incarnate divine Desire,  
Rose of Life, crowded with petals, colour's lyre !



·Transform the body of the mortal like a sweet and magical rhyme ;  
 Bridge our earthhood and heavenhood, make deathless the Children of  
 Time.

Rose of God, like a blush of rapture on Eternity's face,  
 Rose of Love, ruby depth of all being, fire-passion of Grace !  
 Arise from the heart of the yearning that sobs in Nature's abyss :  
 Make earth the home of the Wonderful and life Beatitude's kiss.

I have looked upon the God-Rose as the supreme Absolute grown a Form of transcendent Beauty that we may term the Divine Mother joining the Infinite to the finite by her role as Creatrix and joining the finite to the Infinite by her role as Mediatrix. Beauty is an expression of Bliss—Bliss that is the ultimate stuff of the Ineffable. So the poem begins with the Rose of God as the Rose of Bliss. Bliss, in creating Beauty, acts as a principle which sees what is to be done, the Truth to be revealed as the Beautiful : it brings a Vision-wisdom into play. So the poem moves on to the Rose of Light. But the Vision-wisdom cannot become a Form of Beauty unless there is an executive Truth-will, the self-dynamising design, the force-filled icon : the Rose of Power. Power that works out a plan is yet insufficient for divine fullness. If its image is not to remain a shining inner formation without a body, if its image is to be not just a force of subjectivity but also a force of objectivity and arrive at an incarnation, there must be a divine Desire for self-growth, self-affirmation, conquest, possession, abundant empire : the Rose of Life. Even here we do not reach the end : we reach only a crowded colourful many-bodied interaction of energies throwing themselves passionately on one another and each drawing the rest to its own self. What is needed too is an inner melting of separate beings with out losing the outer individuality, a melting of each into each by a passion of self-giving : a multitudinous unity has to be realised if the intensest depth of the creative Beatitude is to be caught in form. The effective power of such Bliss-oneness is the yearning between the Lover and the Beloved : hence the supreme Absolute grown a form of Beauty cannot come wholly into its own with divine Desire and without being a Rose of Love.

The Rose of God is full-blown in the transcendent realms : its fivefold divineness has to blossom gradually in the universe where human existence has evolved. The divineness of Bliss has to manifest in the happiness-seeking heart of man, giving him the Supreme Beauty in the general essence of its delightful being, the essence of the ever-blissful Spirit. The divineness of Light has to manifest in our mental thought, giving us the truth-sight by which that Beauty may be kept unperverted by ignorance. The divineness of Power has to manifest in our will, giving us the energy to guard and carry out the

truth-sight in all our inner activity. The divineness of Life has to manifest in our embodied vitality, our physical mould vivified by the impulse to grow, the urge to possess : it will give us the actualisation of the truth-force in a collectivity of earth-shapes which have conquered Time's stroke of death. But man is not only thought, will, embodied vitality. He is also a soul which is his deepest self in the cosmos and which functions from far behind through his emotional heart which is the centre of his conscious organism. This soul is a spontaneous self-giver and God-worshipper and holds the ultimate yearning of Nature for the Divine Grace that has itself plunged into the abyss of Matter as a Saviour and urges everything higher and higher towards God. So the divineness of Love has to manifest in this soul and give it the secret of a world-wide harmony of human beings keyed by spiritual adoration to the divineness of Bliss in a detailed intensity of perfect Beauty.

"A detailed intensity of perfect Beauty"—the phrase may well be taken as a summary of the poetic quality of Sri Aurobindo's five incantatory stanzas. Let us glance at the intensest details. In the first stanza the first outstanding effect is : "vermilion stain." The word "stain" is a happy violence showing the passion that bursts forth as if with God's own rich blood forced through the rapt distance of the Absolute. The suggestion of "blemish" in the word adds a sublime piquancy to the passion, as if Divine Perfection were being divinely sullied in a spurt of self-abandon and self-disclosure. The next effect to catch attention is : "fire-sweet." It is an unusual combination in which we have the passing of the seen through the touched into the tasted. And to get this combination needs not only a fusion of the senses but also their turning subtle to concretise the realities of inner experience. On the non-mystical level, that experience may be romantic fervour or idealistic enthusiasm. Or it may be creative art-frenzy: have we not Hopkins writing of "Sweet fire, the sire of Muse.. " ? On the mystical level, it is the contact of the Divine, the communion with the Eternal, bringing an all-enkindling all-consuming joy in which the separative ego is lost in an infinite radiance. Besides being remarkable in itself, "fire-sweet" is very much in place where it stands. It concentrates at the same time the warm violence of the words "vermilion stain" and the opulent ardency of the next phrase "seven-tinged with the Ecstasies seven". It is a grip-point between the two and leads from the one to the other. This other phrase also is arresting. Here the operative term is "seven-tinged". If merely "tinged" were used, the "Ecstasies seven" would surely indicate the variety of the tingeing, but the impression would miss the intense colour-impact as well as the intense multiplicity. Although only seven the Ecstasies are said to be, we feel as if they were seven times seven and as many times flushed.

The entire last line,

Passion-flower of the Nameless, bud of the mystical Name,

is splendid. As my remarks in the previous Talk must have made it clear, the designation "passion-flower" here has nothing to do with the genus of plants whose flower is taken in Europe to suggest the instruments of Christ's Passion—that is, Christ's suffering on the cross: I spoke of the flower-flush which is the Nameless Absolute in its passion of manifestation in the superhuman azures above and I contrasted it to the bud-glow which is the same Absolute manifesting as the mystical Name, the Divinity relating its miracle-flame to the human heart and leaping up there, a progressive perfection, in answer to that heart's cry for happiness. What endows the first half of the expression with a striking felicity is the linking of passion with the Nameless: we realise that the full flowering of the Absolute in the Rose of Bliss is only the bringing out of an intensity existing in some inconceivable manner in the very being of That which seems infinitely aloof. There is also a challenge to the imagination by the Nameless getting called a flower and the Name a bud. And in both halves of the line the use of "Nameless" and "Name" in connection with the floral image creates a rich yet elusive mysticism which is most haunting. The predominant lip-rhythm—*p, m, b, m* and again *m*—helps to suggest not only the opening of something closed but also the mouthlike objects that are the very theme—the vermilion flower and bud.

In the second stanza, there are

Rose of Light, immaculate core of the ultimate seeing

and

Sun on the head of the Timeless, guest of the marvellous Hour—

two excellent lines in reference to the divine original whose imperfect translation is our mental thought and which has to make this thought no longer a translation but a transference of the "great wisdom-bloom on the summits of being" (another phrase which is excellent poetry conjuring up by its long *ea* and *oo* and *e* as well as by its heavy consonantal accumulations—*gr, sd, mbl, ts, ng*—the presence itself of the high-hung massive flower spoken of). The former line pictures very emphatically what Mind is in its origin. In its true form Mind is no mere thinker, no dealer in abstractions from outside the reality of things. The archetypal Mind is a self-existent Light, the clear and pure depth of a dynamic vision and, as shown by the succeeding phrase asking the Rose of Light to live in the mind of our earthhood, it is capable of palpitant activity. Both when it is called a Rose of Light and when designated as a "golden mystery" and asked to flower in earth's

mentality, we understand that it is a power of Truth that is also a power of Beauty. Coming as such, it enters the time-movement with the warmth and intimacy of a beloved guest. The Divine Mind is Wisdom, an intuitive illumination measuring out and connecting rightly, happily, harmoniously according to the essence of each detail and the essence of the *ensemble* without which the details have no final significance. That Wisdom is a great golden bloom of mystery—a sovereign and unerring insight is the mysterious gold of this great bloom, an intense loveliness and a creative artistry are the bloomed greatness of this gold that is a mystery. The Wisdom on the summits of being has all Plato and Hegel in it, every analytic acuteness, every synthetic sweep those master-philosophers possessed, but it has also a direct Seerhood far beyond their brains : it is free from the obscurities of the time-process, it is a head crowned with a Sun. The picture in the phrase about the head of the Timeless is startling in its splendour : the poetry of it brings almost a bodily feeling of a supraphysical yet not abstract or tenuous experience.

In the third stanza, the most gripping turns in my opinion are “damask force of Infinity” and “thy diamond halo piercing the night”. The adjective “damask” carries out a double function. Its obvious significance is “red” and it takes our thought to the variety of rose known as “Damask Rose” and thus proves itself apt for characterising the Rose of God. But it does not only mean “coloured like the Damask Rose”. That variety of rose came originally from Damascus, a city especially celebrated for its steel sword-blade with a wavy surface-pattern in it, and the adjective also signifies a resemblance to such a blade. The extraordinariness of the Divine Force, its quality of being most beautiful and most cutting-keen, is caught in the adjective. The phrase about the diamond halo is extremely apt too. “Diamond” is suggestive both of sheer white luminosity and of intense pure strength that masters everything : diamond is the most brilliant and the hardest substance we know of. Nothing can be more a piercer of “night” than a diamond halo radiating from a Rose of Power. And we may fittingly visualise the piercing as made by rays like innumerable Damascus sword-blades shooting their sheen all around.

The fourth stanza grips us first with “smitten purple with the incarnate divine Desire”. In the vivid violence of “smitten purple” we find the innate impetuosity of the divine Desire that is self-driven as by a torture of delight and we find the burning pressure and irresistible impact this Desire would bring in getting itself incarnated, becoming subanced and shaped into flesh. Purple, to occult sight, is the colour of the Life-Force, but the phrase under scrutiny has even a practical appositeness : if you smite any part of your body you will see a purple patch on the skin ! The same stanza arrests us next with “colour’s lyre”, a turn suggestive of colour growing a sound-power, artistic vision grow-

ing a mantra, Divine Beauty capable of converting into a rhythmic whole whatever it touches and tinges with its passionate joy. The phrase prepares by a packed symbol the poetic ground for the appeal in the next line :

Transform the body of the mortal like a sweet and magical rhyme.

Perhaps the word "rhyme" is meant to convey not only a rhythmic whole but also a harmony answering in the manifestation below to the epiphany above. And the position of the word at the line-end, where rhyming is done in poetry, endows it with a finely realistic gesture, so that the point is made with a recognisable concreteness and finality.

The last stanza gives three memorable locutions. First is "a blush of rapture on Eternity's face". The word "face" is the right expressive step forward after the poet has spoken in the fourth stanza of divine Desire becoming embodied, just as the word "incarnate" there is the right expressive step after the "icon" of the third stanza and just as "icon" is the right expressive step after the second stanza's "seeing" and just as "seeing" is the right expressive step after the "fire-sweet" self-experience with which in the first stanza ecstatic passion goes forth to create. A locution of great felicity also is "ruby depth of all being". The whole richness of mystical Love is in "ruby depth" : the richness would not be mystical enough if "crimson" or "carmine" or "scarlet" or any other equivalent of "red" were used. There are three reasons why they would fall short. The first is phonetic and this itself has a threefold aspect. The initial vowel in "ruby" is a long oo-sound evoking a sense of inwardness in tune with the noun "depth" which is qualified by this adjective. The adjective has a labial consonant akin to the *p* of "depth" and identical with the *b* of "being" : a unity is established by this triple consonance as if the depth of all being could be nothing so aptly as "ruby". Then there is the second syllable "by" with a short sound anticipating and preparing the long "be" of "being", thus affining the adjective to the very starting-point of the being whose depth it qualifies. All this is the phonetic felicity involved. The second reason is the concreteness given to the depth by an adjective made from the name of a precious stone : not merely redness is here but a tangible object saving the depth from striking us as an abstraction artificially daubed over with a colour-epithet. Justice is done to the substantiality of spiritual experience. Thirdly, the ruby is a precious stone found not on earth's surface but far underground : in addition to an inward-pointing sound harmonising with the rest of the phrase and in addition to a colourful concreteness true to spirituality, the adjective carries a direct association of depth.

Now we come to the final phrase that is outstanding in a poem of uninterrupted precision of imaginative language :

Arise from the heart of the yearning that sobs in Nature's abyss.

An exceedingly moving expression is here, charged with a profound sweetness of pathos. The *r* common to "Arise" and "heart" and "yearning" make, in combination with prominent long vowels, the first half of the expression one whole of clear liquidity melodiously surging up : a sense of welling tears is exquisitely conveyed. The *s* common to "sobs" and "Nature's" and "abyss" makes, in combination with prominent short vowels, the second half one whole of halting sibilance like a repeated catch in the breath : a sense of deeply felt yet softly uttered distress is communicated. And the two halves are bound together by one *s* occurring in the first and one *r* in the second. The right rhythm bearing out the significance of the right words—there we have the double secret of this line in which a world-woe finds tongue, with an art equalling in its own way the art of Shakespeare's

And in this harsh world draw thy breath in pain  
and the art of Virgil's

Sunt lacrimae rerum et mentem mortalia tangunt,

which C. Day Lewis has Englished :

Tears in the nature of things, hearts touched by human transience.

But Sri Aurobindo has a language of profounder implication. Apart from that implication which we have already dealt with when expounding the mystical metaphysics and psychology of the poem, there are one or two points about the effective interplay of the meaning of certain words. "Arise" becomes intense by contrast to "abyss"; and what is asked to arise—the rapture-blushed Rose of Love—gets its intensity from "sobs" : a sob too arises, it is a sound that comes up from the heart's yearning, and now instead of it the God-Rose is asked to bring up its rapture-blush.

Everywhere in *Rose of God* we have a language that is not only profound but also life-packed, as language should be when it attempts the revelation of spiritual reality. It can be simple but with a direct stroke and not with an easy-going fluency, or it can be rich but with a density of semi-occult semi-physical vision and not with a loose deccrativeness of intellectual or emotional stuff coupled with pleasing images. The spiritual style simple is in : "outbreak of the Godhead in man". Just one word is enough to bring a beautiful energy from within, going straight to its goal without. It is also in : "Beatitude's kiss." Here too one word gathers up all the piercing intimacy of Beatitude : a word

like “touch” or even “clasp” would not give that intimacy. And, further, “kiss” is very appropriate because sobbing has been mentioned before it: the mouth is involved in both sobbing and kissing : life which is a sob of Nature becomes a kiss of Supernature. The spiritual style rich in phrases like “vermilion stain” and “Sun on the head of the Timeless”, which exert an audacious pictorial pressure on us.

I may close my survey by saying that each of the two sides in every stanza—the high above that is for ever and the down below that has to be—imposes its significances upon our spiritual sense not only by vivid words mystically visionary but also by an inner tone massively musical. And it is because of this tone that we have brought in the poem under the class of symphonic melopoeia.

However, it is a poem which could easily be classed as iconopoeia because of the abundance of its imagery. And, as such, it would belong to the highest revelatory order, the iconopoeic counterpart of the highest incantatory in melopoeia. And its double nature may be said to be indicated by the very character and potency ascribed to the Rose of God. That Rose is apostrophised as “red icon of might” and “image of immortality” as well as invoked to

Transform the body of the mortal like a sweet and magical rhyme.

A comprehensive yet brief summing up of the simultaneously iconopoeic and melopoeic beauty of the piece is in the phrase already quoted : “colour’s lyre.”

(Mind the spelling of the word “lyre”. Musical truth is what colour is here imagined to create. Don’t slip into spelling the word as l-i-a-r ! That spelling may designate a lot of human art but not the Yogic art of the Divine Consciousness.)

AMAL KIRAN  
(K. D. SETHNA)

NOTE

*By oversight two paragraphs, meant to conclude “Talk Eighteen” which appeared in the last issue of ‘Mother India’, got omitted. They are given below for readers to refer them back to where they belong so that the earlier exposition may be complete :*

Here two more quotations from Sri Aurobindo will be apt. “A psychic fire within must be lit into which all is thrown with the Divine Name upon it. In that fire all the emotions are compelled to cast off their grosser elements and those

that are undivine perversions are burned away and the others discard their insufficiencies, till a spirit of largest love and a stainless divine delight arises out of the flame and smoke and frankincense. It is the divine love which so emerges that, extended in inward feeling to the Divine in man and all creatures in an active universal equality, will be more potent for the perfectibility of life and a more real instrument than the ineffective mental ideal of brotherhood can ever be. It is this poured out into acts that could alone create a harmony in the world and a true unity between all its creatures ; all else strives in vain towards that end so long as Divine Love has not disclosed itself as the heart of the delivered manifestation in terrestrial Nature.”<sup>1</sup> What “all else”—mind, life-force, physical consciousness—would do without the psyche is well driven home by Sri Aurobindo : “Instead of a Divine Love creator of a new heaven and a new earth of Truth and Light, they would hold it here prisoner as a tremendous sanction and glorifying force of sublimation to guild the mud of the old earth and colour with its rose and sapphire the old turbid unreal skies of sentimentalising vital imagination and mental idealised chimera.”<sup>2</sup>

Mark that Sri Aurobindo begins by speaking of the Divine Name and ends with speaking of the rose and sapphire of Divine Love. With them we circle back to the Rose of Bliss and its “vermilion stain on the sapphires of heaven” and its “passion-flower of the Nameless, bud of the mystical Name.”

<sup>1</sup> *The Synthesis of Yoga*, Vol. I, pp. 187-188.

*Ibid.*, p. 189,



## THE BREATH OF THE SPIRIT

THE human Guru whispers the sacred formula into the ears ; the Divine Guru breathes the spirit into the soul.

SRI RAMAKRISHNA

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What shall you give ? The most beautiful, most powerful, most wonderful of all gifts is yourself—your faith, your trust, your love.

ANONYMOUS

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Rabbi Mosche Leib of Sasou once gave his last coin to a man of evil reputation. His students reproached him for it, whereupon he replied : "Shall I be more particular than God, who gave the coin to me ?"

HASIDIC STORY

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Be kindled, child ; become God's candle-light.

ANGELUS SILESIVS

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Folly, to drink from puddles by the way  
When have at home the crystal fountain play.

ANGELUS SILESIVS

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The desire of man being Infinite, the possession is Infinite, and himself Infinite.

BLAKE

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Worry not that you are not known, seek to be worth knowing.

CONFUCIVS

## TOWARDS "THE LIFE DIVINE"

*The Life Divine* by Sri Aurobindo is a unique work. The kind of attitude of mind necessary to understand aright its inmost truth requires a little consideration. The first necessity for a comprehension of a great work, according to eminent thinkers, is to have a close identification with the mind of the author or with the lines of his thought. The root principle of acquiring all knowledge is to establish this identification. This, of course, admits of variations in degrees. At the top is knowledge by identity, an inseparable relationship of the knower with the thing to be known. The sense of perfect oneness however is not easy to achieve. To begin with, one has to start with a mental receptivity and openness. This desire to know is the first step towards acquiring knowledge. So said once the western philosopher Hegel to his students. For, unless we set about with a mind wide open to Knowledge how can we hope to get into her inner treasures? Be it scientific, philosophical or spiritual, research into every form of knowledge calls for a mind open, stout and free. In the words of Bacon, the basic condition for unveiling the mysteries of nature is to have freedom from *idola*, from fixed ideas, from disordered imagination or sentimentalism. The pursuit of philosophical truth also demands a similar attitude. The English philosopher Locke holds that in order to be able to explore the truth one has first to wipe out of the mind all preconceived notions and make it a *tabula rasa*, a blank tablet. This is far more necessary in the exploration of spiritual truths. Here the mind must be like the sky, vast and translucent, free from fixed ideas, free from rigid mental determinations, void even of latent impressions of our past actions, moveless and tranquil. Naturally this ideal mental condition is hard to attain. But if there is a genuine thirst for knowledge, then the mind can be gradually built up on it as the base.

Among the obstacles that stand in the way of our progress towards true knowledge, the strongest is perhaps the latent impressions of our past actions. There is no limit to the extent of superstitions that prevail in our individual and social life. I am tempted to relate a small incident in this connection. An intimate friend of mine, professor of a college, once enquired of me, "Sri Aurobindo is alleged to have attained to spiritual perfection. If so, how does he then continue to write books?" I tried my utmost to convince him that there is no incompatibility between the highest realisation and writing books. But I was an utter failure. His conviction was that without the cessation of

## TOWARDS "THE LIFE DIVINE"

thought there could be no samadhi (trance) or the supreme realisation. He was not prepared to admit that the control over the modes of thought is neither the sole nor the highest way of Yoga. Besides, he could hardly grasp that in the integral Yoga of Sri Aurobindo there is provision for even the transformation of consciousness. He could not understand simply because the mind is influenced by and preoccupied with certain settled convictions about the nature of Yoga, the Yogic discipline and its achievements. Our within and without have been benumbed by the unfortunate misinterpretations of our old education and culture; we cannot see beyond mere casual suspension of thought in trance (*jar-samādhi*), the state of the Self shining by Itself, bereft of all connections with nature (*kaivalya*), the doctrine of the reality of the Self and unreality of the world, renunciation of the worldly life and resort to the life of a recluse and aloofness from wealth and women, etc. No space is left for free breathing. And its consequence is wonderfully queer. Those who have just got the call of the spiritual life are often found in an awkward position. The temper of our time does not permit them to embrace the life of an anchorite and to renounce the world, severing all connections with wife and children, yet, at the same time, they cannot wholeheartedly accept the activities of life. On one hand, the prospect of austere renunciation strikes terror into their heart; on the other, they shudder at the very idea of blind absorption in action. If we at all want to escape from this self-contradiction prevailing in our life and society, then we need must discover a new ideal. *The Life Divine* of Sri Aurobindo will give us the precise clue to that much-needed ideal which will enable us to rejuvenate our diseased mind, life and body.

We do not say that renunciation is an untruth or that the world-shunning seekers have made a Himalayan mistake. We shall only say that we are not of the same school. Sri Aurobindo, the Seer of the age, has discovered such an unprecedented truth as will bring about a harmonious synthesis in life. From the golden realm of the Supermind he is bringing down to this earth of clay the idea and power of immortal life. If we truly and in earnest bear the burden, the kingdom of Heaven may be established on earthly soil. Before that we must liberate ourselves from all rigid ideas or mental determinations. Inspired by this taste of freedom we have to open every plane of the mind to the free Bhagirathi-like flow of the unique Yogic Power of the Lord of Yoga ushering in a new age.

Another point to which we would like to draw attention is: Though the ideal established by Sri Aurobindo in his *magnum opus* has been founded on the bedrock of profound philosophical principles, the fount of its source resides far above the domain of philosophical thought and the sphere of the mind.

## MOTHER INDIA

The vision of his Yogic realisation he has brought down to the level of philosophy and expressed it in philosophical terms. The perusal of *The Life Divine* clearly indicates that Sri Aurobindo has not dealt with mere philosophical data with the power of his intellectual acumen. As we go on reading the chapters we, in no time, begin to feel ourselves elevated to an illumined plane. We are not aware if such an experience can be had by reading any of the Western philosophers. It is so, precisely because the doctrines of the western philosophers are but battles of words fought with the help of the wavering intellect. Consequently behind every doctrine a shadow of ignorance, a scruple of doubt, a lack of self-confidence are to be found. They have not endeavoured to see into the real nature of truth from the region above the mind. But the philosophers of India who deserve to be called seers have discovered truth by transcending the boundaries of the syllogistic mind. Every philosophical doctrine of theirs is based on some Yogic realisation. From time immemorial there has been an attempt in India to penetrate into the realm of knowledge through the power of Yoga. That attempt has reached its acme in *The Life Divine*. Sri Aurobindo has brought about a complete synthesis of all the different truths in this wonderful philosophy of his all-comprehensive, infinite consciousness. To be sure, if we go through *The Life Divine* keeping this in view, we are likely to derive the best benefit from it.

(To be continued)

NARENDRA NATH DAS GUPTA

(Translated by Chinmoy from the Bengali Talks given in  
'Pathamandir', in 1944.)