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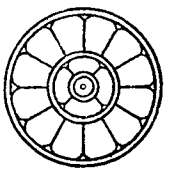
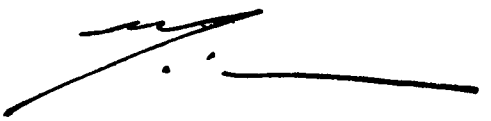


Lord, Thou hast willed, and I execute.
A new light breaks upon the earth,
A new world is born.
The things that were promised are fulfilled.



MOTHER INDIA

MONTHLY REVIEW OF CULTURE

Vol. XIII **No. 4**

"Great is Truth and it shall prevail"

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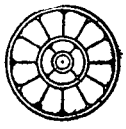
Students' Section

THE MESSAGE OF APRIL 24, 1961



An inner relation means that one feels the Mother's presence, is turned to her at all times, is aware of her force moving, guiding, helping, is full of love for her and always feels a great nearness whether one is physically near her or not. This relation takes up the mind, vital and inner physical till one feels one's mind close to the Mother's mind, one's vital in harmony with hers, one's very physical consciousness full of her.

Sri Aurobindo

RÉPONSES—ANSWERS

Q. Douce Mère, dans la prière annuelle Tu dis: "Ce monde merveilleux de félicité à nos portes, qui attend notre appel pour descendre sur la terre..."
S'il Te plaît explique ceci, n'est-il pas déjà descendu?

R. Ce n'est pas le monde de félicité qui est descendu, mais seulement la Lumière, la Conscience et la Force Supramentales.

LA MÈRE

Q. Sweet Mother, in the annual prayer You say : "This wonderful world of delight waiting at our gates for our call, to come down upon earth..."
Please explain this: has it not already descended?

A. It is not the world of delight that has descended, but only the Supramental Light, Consciousness and Force.

THE MOTHER

Q. Douce Mère, est-il possible de T'aimer parfaitement, *absolument, avant la découverte de l'être psychique en nous?*

R. Dans l'homme terrestre, c'est l'être psychique seul qui connaît l'amour vrai. Quant à l'amour *parfait* cela n'existe que dans le Divin.

LA MÈRE

Q. Sweet Mother, is it possible to love You perfectly, *absolutely, before discovering the psychic being in ourselves?*

A. In earthly man, it is the psychic being alone that knows true love. As for *perfect* love, it exists only in the Divine.

THE MOTHER

Q. Douce Mère, Sri Aurobindo nous dit: "God in his perfection embraces everything; we also must become all-embracing." Il y a beaucoup de mésententes chez les jeunes gens sur cette phrase. Que veut dire ceci exactement?

R. Il doit être bien entendu qu'il n'est question ici d'aucun embrassement physique; comme pourraient aimer à le suggerer de mauvais plaisants ayant des goûts et des habitudes de voyous et qui cherchent dans ce qu'a écrit Sri Aurobindo une excuse pour leurs débordements. Les embrassements divins sont des embrassements d'âme et de consciences, et ne peuvent se reproduire

chez les êtres humains que par un élargissement de la conscience, de la compréhension et des sentiments, qui vous rend capable de tout comprendre et de tout aimer, sans préférence ni exclusivisme.

LA MÈRE

Q. Sweet Mother, Sri Aurobindo tells us: "God in his perfection embraces everything; we also must become all-embracing." There is a lot of misunderstanding among young people with regard to this sentence. What exactly does it mean?

A. It ought to be well understood that there is no question here of the physical embrace, as mischievous wags would like to suggest—they who have the tastes and the habits of street-urchins and who seek in what Sri Aurobindo has written an excuse for their dissoluteness. The divine embrace is the embrace of souls and consciousnesses and can be reproduced in human beings only by an enlargement of the consciousness, of the understanding and of feelings, an enlargement which makes you capable of understanding all and loving all, without preference or exclusiveness.

THE MOTHER

Q. Douce Mère, on nous dit que les conditions étaient beaucoup plus strictes et la discipline plus rigoureuse à l'ashram avant l'arrivée des enfants. Comment et pourquoi ces conditions ont-elles changé maintenant?

R Avant l'arrivée des enfants, seuls étaient admis à l'ashram ceux qui voulaient faire la sadhana et seules étaient tolérées les habitudes et les activités utiles à la pratique de la sadhana.

Mais comme il serait déraisonnable d'exiger que les enfants fassent une sadhana, cette rigidité a dû disparaître du moment où les enfants furent introduits dans l'ashram.

LA MÈRE

Q. We are told that conditions in the Ashram were much more strict and the discipline more stern before the arrival of the children. How and why have these conditions changed now?

A. Before the arrival of the children, those alone were admitted to the Ashram who wanted to do sadhana and only those habits and activities were tolerated which were useful to the practice of sadhana.

But as it would be unreasonable to demand that the children should do sadhana, this rigidity was bound to disappear the moment that the children were introduced into the Ashram.

THE MOTHER

WORDS OF THE MOTHER

Q. Quelle est l'utilité de la raison dans notre vie?

Sans la raison, notre vie serait incohérente et désordonnée; nous vivrions comme des animaux impulsifs ou des fous déséquilibrés.

6-4-1961

Q. What is the utility of the reason in our life?

Without the reason, our life would be incoherent and disorderly; we would live like impulsive animals or unbalanced lunatics.

6-4-1961

WORDS OF SRI AUROBINDO

THIS IS not a Yoga in which abnormality of any kind, even if it be an exalted abnormality, can be admitted as a way to self-fulfilment or spiritual realisation. Even when one enters into supernormal and suprarational experience, there should be no disturbance of the poise which must be kept firm from the summit of the consciousness to its base; the experiencing consciousness must preserve a calm balance, an unfailing clarity and order in its observation, a sort of sublimated commonsense, an unfailing power of self-criticism, right discrimination, coordination and firm vision of things; a sane grasp on facts and a high spiritualised positivism must always be there. It is not by becoming irrational or infrarational that one can go beyond ordinary nature into supernature; it should be done by passing through reason to a greater light of superreason. This superreason descends into reason and takes it up into higher levels even while breaking its limitations; reason is not lost but changes and becomes its true unlimited self, a coordinating power of the supernature.

(*The Synthesis of Yoga*, Part One, Chapter XIII)

TALKS WITH SRI AUROBINDO

(These talks are from the Note-books of Dr. Nirodbaran who used to record most of the conversations which Sri Aurobindo had with his attendants and a few others, after the accident to his leg in November 1938. Besides the recorder, the attendants were : Dr. Manilal, Dr. Becherlal, Purani, Champaklal, Dr. Satyendra and Mulshanker. 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.

This is the fifth talk in the new Series which follows a chronological order and begins at the very beginning. The four earliest talks, after Sri Aurobindo's accident, appeared in Mother India *in 1952. We are now picking up where we then stopped and shall continue systematically.)*

DECEMBER 23, 1938

WE assembled again as usual and were eager to start the talk, but nobody dared to begin without any hint or gesture from Sri Aurobindo. He was lying calmly in the bed.

C slowly approached him, looking by turns at him and at us. We saw a ray of hope in this attempt, but looking at C's combination of eagerness and hesitation N could not check his amusement. So he moved away from Sri Aurobindo's presence and, lying down on the floor, shook and rolled with suppressed laughter. Sri Aurobindo at once noticed that something was going on.

SRI AUROBINDO : What's the matter ?

P : N is rolling with laughter !

SRI AUROBINDO : Descent of Ananda ?

N : It is Champaklal...

SRI AUROBINDO : Oh, descent of Champaklal ?

At this the whole atmosphere changed and P, catching the opportunity, shot a question with a beaming face.

P : Because hostile forces offer resistance to the divine manifestation in the world and some even become victorious, can it be said with any logic

that the Divine lacks omnipotence ? It is not my question. I am asking somebody else's. Personally I don't think so.

SRI AUROBINDO (*turning his head towards P*) : It depends on what you mean by omnipotence. If the idea is that God must always succeed, then when He does not we should conclude that He is not omnipotent. But do you mean to say that in spite of resistance He must invariably succeed ? People have very queer ideas of omnipotence. Resistance is the very law of evolution. Resistance comes from Ignorance and Ignorance is a part of Inconscience. From the very beginning the opposition between Knowledge and Ignorance was created. The whole thing starts from Inconscience. It is the complete denial of the Divine. His Lila or Play is precisely that the manifestation shall proceed through resistance and struggle. What sort of Lila will it be in which one side goes on winning every time ? Divine Omnipotence works through the universal law. There are forces of light and forces of darkness. To say that the forces of light shall always succeed is the same as saying that truth and good shall always succeed, though there is no such thing as unmixed truth and good. Divine omnipotence intervenes only at critical or decisive moments.

Every time the light has tried to descend, it has met with resistance and opposition. Christ was crucified. You may ask why it should be like that when he was innocent. Yet his very crucifixion was the divine dispensation. Buddha was denied. Sons of light come, the earth denies them, rejects them and afterwards accepts them in name in order to reject them in substance. Only a small minority grows towards a spiritual birth and it is through them the divine manifestation takes place.

What remains of Buddhism today except a few edicts of Asoka and a few hundred thousand Buddhists ?

N : Asoka helped in propagating Buddhism.

SRI AUROBINDO : Anybody could have done that.

N : But didn't it become all-powerful through his aid ?

SRI AUROBINDO : If kings and emperors had left Buddhism to those people who were really spiritual, it would have been much better for real Buddhism. That is always the case with spiritual things. It was after Constantine embraced Christianity that it began to decline in its substance. The King of Norway about whom Longfellow wrote a poem killed all people who were not Christians and thus succeeded in establishing Christianity ! The same happened to Mohammedanism where it succeeded and the followers of the Prophet became Caliphs. Not kings and emperors but those who are truly spiritual keep spirituality alive.

N : Asoka sacrificed everything for Buddhism.

SRI AUROBINDO : But he remained an emperor till the end. When kings and emperors try to spread a religion, they make the whole thing mental and moral and the inner truth is lost. Asoka succeeded in being Asoka : that's all.

There was a short silence after this. Then the talk recommenced with a slight change of subject.

N : Raman Maharshi was hardly known. It was Brunton who spread his name.

SRI AUROBINDO : It is a strange measure of success people adopt in judging a spiritual man by the number of disciples. Who was a greater success—Raman Maharshi surrounded by all sorts of disciples or Raman Maharshi doing his sadhana in seclusion for years ? Success to be real must be spiritual.

Then the talk turned on Ashrams in general and the mismanagement of some while the Guru remains indifferent. The difficulties of staying in some Ashrams were also cited.

SRI AUROBINDO : One Mrs. Kelly went to see Maharshi and was seen fidgetting about mosquitoes during meditation. Afterwards she complained to him of mosquito-bites. Maharshi told her that if she couldn't bear mosquito-bites she couldn't do yoga. Mrs. Kelly couldn't understand the significance of this statement. She wanted spirituality without mosquitoes.

Trouble also arises because of quarrelling among disciples.

P : A certain disciple of Maharshi criticised Brunton, saying he was using Maharshi's name and making money. He said too that Brunton was taking notes during meditation and that after jotting down what came into his head he would declare it was from Maharshi.

SRI AUROBINDO : And yet Brunton is a seeker of the Truth, though he has serious difficulties.

Perhaps you know the famous story about Maharshi. Once, getting disgusted with the Ashram and the disciples, he started to go away to the mountains. He passed along a narrow path flanked by hills. He came upon an old woman sitting with her legs stretched across the path. He requested her to draw aside her legs but she wouldn't. Then he walked across them. She became very angry and said : "Why are you so restless ? Why can't you sit in one place at Arunachalam instead of moving about? Go back to your place and worship Shiva there." Her remarks struck him and he retraced his steps. After going some distance he looked back. He found that nobody was there. It flashed on him that the Divine Mother herself had spoken and had wanted him to remain at Arunachalam.

Of course it was the Divine Mother who had asked him to go back. Maharshi is intended to live this sort of life. He has nothing to do with what happens around him. He remains calm and detached. The man is still what he always was.

By the way, I am glad to hear of Maharshi shouting at some Indian Christians. It means he also can become dynamic.

The only Ashram I have heard of, in which there was great unity, was

Thakur Dayananda's. Once I wrote an article on the Avatar in the *Karmayogin*. Mahendra Dey, one of Dayananda's disciples, seeing the article wrote to me : "Here is the Avatar." He was very enthusiastic about it. But when there was police-firing and arrests and he was imprisoned, he became changed and said that previously he had been hypnotised by Dayananda.

N : Why are Gurus obliged to work with imperfect and defective people like us ? In our Ashram the difficulty seems to be more keen.

SRI AUROBINDO : What you say about Gurus has been a puzzle to me also. But it is like that. Our case is a little different. Our aim is to change the world—though not universally, of course. Hence everyone here represents human nature with all its difficulties as well as capacities. (*Looking at N*) That's how your difficulties are explained !

DECEMBER 25, 1938

Dr. S. Rao arrived and, as before, was insisting that the splints could safely be removed from Sri Aurobindo's leg on the New Year's day. We couldn't assent to this.

Dr. R : I discussed the point with the specialist. But we begged to differ. The specialist's opinion is that the splints should be kept for ten weeks more.

MOTHER : Do doctors change their opinions ?

DR. R : This specialist has changed his. But the question is to be decided by Sri Aurobindo.

When Dr. R had gone, the Mother asked Sri Aurobindo what he thought.

SRI AUROBINDO : I can't take the risk. I have to be very careful as I am not sure that violent movements won't take place in sleep. Besides, the adverse forces have to be considered. The specialist said, "Ten weeks more"—Dr. Rao says, "Six weeks in all". We will take the *via media*. That will satisfy both.

N : Dr. Rao always emphasises that you are an extraordinary patient who can be trusted to follow directions.

SRI AUROBINDO : Then I have to take extraordinary care. (*Laughter*)

After a few minutes the Mother departed for meditation and there was a spell of silence. We were wakened from it by a remark of Sri Aurobindo's.

SRI AUROBINDO : Doctors are born to differ. It seems to me that medical science has developed much knowledge but in application it is either an art or a fluke.

S and P agreed to the remark and said that as regards application medical science was not exact as yet. N observed that this was so because of individual variation.

SRI AUROBINDO : They have not found any drug that can cure a particular disease in all cases. I am talking of allopathy, not homeopathy, about which I know nothing. Even in theory, which they have developed remarkably, there is always a change of opinion. What they hold as true today is discarded after ten years. Now TB has been proved by a French doctor with statistics to be not a contagious disease. He says it is hereditary. What a great relief this will be ! I myself haven't found it contagious. Take also the question of diet. They are changing their ideas constantly. Some day medical science will become exact.

Then S brought in the question of unscrupulousness and incapacity of private practitioners and held that medical practice should be under State control.

SRI AUROBINDO : I don't believe in that. I like State control less than medical control.

N : It will be a better arrangement. Take the example of County Councils which particularly enjoin the regular examination of people by medical attendance.

SRI AUROBINDO : What about poor Yogis then, who may not like being examined ?

P : There is Joad's arrangement in London.

N : The patients of a particular area under the charge of one doctor can't change to another doctor without sufficient reason.

SRI AUROBINDO : What if one doesn't believe in a doctor or doesn't like him ?

N : That isn't a sufficient reason, for the Council sees that all doctors are well trained.

SRI AUROBINDO : Why isn't it a sufficient reason ? It is an excellent reason. Why should there be no choice ? You may as well force a patient here to be under R and not go to Savoor. I have no faith in such Government controls, because I believe in a certain amount of freedom, freedom to find out things for oneself in one's own way, freedom to commit blunders even. Nature leads us through various errors and eccentricities. When Nature created the human being with all his possibilities for good or ill, she knew very well what she was about. Freedom for experiment in human life is a great thing. Without freedom to take risks and commit mistakes, there can be no progress.

N : But without a sufficient growth of consciousness one may abuse the freedom.

SRI AUROBINDO : One must take the risk. Growth of consciousness can't come without freedom. You can of course have certain elementary laws and develop sanitation and spread the knowledge of health and hygiene among the people. The State can certainly provide efficient medical service, but when

one exceeds one's province the error comes in. To say that one can't change one's doctor even if one does not believe in him or like him is, it seems to me, a little too much.

It all began from the pressure of development of physical sciences in Europe. In these sciences one can be exact and precise and everything is mechanical and fixed. This is all right as far as physical things are concerned because there if you make a mistake Nature hits you on the nose and you are made to see it. But the moment you try to apply the same rules in dealing with life and mind, you may go on committing errors and never know it. You will refuse to see them because of a fixed mental idea which tries to fit everything to its own view.

Everything is moving towards that in Europe. The totalitarian States do not believe in the existence of any individual variation, and even non-totalitarian States are obliged to follow them. Yes, they do it for the sake of efficiency. But whose efficiency ? It is the efficiency of the State, the organised machine, not that of the individual. The individual has no freedom, he doesn't grow. Organise by all means, but there must be scope for freedom and plasticity.

In India, even in spirituality they allowed all sorts of experiments, including the Vama Marga, the Left-hand Path, of the Tantra, and you see how wonderfully Indian spirituality has developed.

N : Sometimes people justify both totalitarianism and imperialism. Shaw, for instance, justifies Italy's conquest of Abyssinia. To show up Abyssinia's inefficiency he says that when one passes through the Denakal desert, one runs the risk of losing one's life.

SRI AUROBINDO : In that case let Shaw keep out of the desert. What business has he to pass through it ?

N : But surely Italy's conquest will bring in culture, aesthetics, roads, buildings, etc., into Abyssinia, a country which is said to be with no civilisation at all ?

SRI AUROBINDO : Aesthetics ? The Negroes have no art ? And what culture will be brought in ? Of course if you walk into a Negro den, you may get killed, but the same thing may happen among the present-day Germans. How many people are aesthetic in England ? And as regards roads and buildings etc., could anyone, looking at life in Port Said, say that the people there are more civilised than the Negroes ? Have you read Phanindra Bose's book on the Santals? He says that the Santals are not at all inferior to other classes of people in the matter of ethics. So also with the Arabian races. Wilfred Scawen Blunt praised them highly as a very sympathetic and honest people. Do you think the average man today is better than a Greek of 2500 years ago—or than an Indian of that time ? Look at the conditon in Germany today. You have seen the Kaiser's remark on Hitler. (*Smiling*) You can't say Germany is progressing.

I have come in contact with the Indian masses and I have found them better than the Europeans of the same class. So too the working classes here—they are superior to the European ones : the latter may be more efficient but that is due to external reasons. The French Governor Solomiac said during the riots that the labourers were really so docile, meek and humble and only when they took to drink did they turn to violence. The Irish doctor in Alipore Jail could not think how the young anarchists who were so gentle and attractive could be revolutionary. Even the ordinary criminals I found very human, they were better than European criminals. There will always be different states of development of humanity. It is a fallacy to say that education will do everything, and your so-called civilisation is not an unmixed good. You have only to look at the "civilised" countries. Take the condition of affairs under Nazism. It is terrible. It is extremely difficult for the individual to assert himself. Everyone is living in a state of tension. Under that tension either the whole thing will break up with a crash or all life will be crushed out of the people. In both cases the result will be a disaster.

Society is after all reverting to the old system—only in another form. It is the revival of monarchy, with an aristocracy and the masses. There is the Fuhrer or leading or sovereign man, like a king; then there is his party, which is the aristocracy, the élite; and there is the general herd of common people. The same arrangement holds with Fascism and Communism. Only the Brahmin classes, the intellectuals, have no place.

After this, there seems to have been a few remarks exchanged on Democracy. Apropos of a question which cannot be remembered, Sri Aurobindo said, in effect : "It is curious how a thing gets spoiled when it is recognised as something. Democracy was a far better thing when it was not called Democracy. When it was given a name, much of the truth went out of it."

N : H used to be a great admirer of Socialism. He would say it is a heaven without God.

SRI AUROBINDO : Why didn't he go and settle in Russia then ? If he had done so, he would have been at once suppressed. I foresaw that Socialism would destroy all freedom of the individual.

N : Is there any difference between Communism and Nazism ?

SRI AUROBINDO : Practically none. The Nazis call themselves National Socialists; the others are simply Socialists. In Communism it is a proletariat government where there are no separate classes : they have abolished the classes and they say that the government is a transitional stage. The Nazis have kept the classes : only, the classes are all bound to the State, everything being under State control just as in Communism.

N : But Communism began with a high ideal and it is certainly better than Fascism or Nazism. The masses have their own government.

SRI AUROBINDO : In what way is it better ? Formerly the masses were unconscious slaves, now they are conscious slaves. Before, they could strike when they were dissatisfied ; now they can't. The main question is whether the people have freedom or not. They are all bound to the State, the Dictator and the Party. They can't even choose the Dictator. And whoever differs from him is mercilessly suppressed. You know about the way they are doing it.

N : But with the abolition of class distinctions there is now a sense of equality : nobody feels superior or inferior.

SRI AUROBINDO : How ? At first, all the generals and soldiers went to run the machines and industrial organisations. But they found that they could not do it. Then they brought in the specialists with high pay and other advantages. The condition of the working classes is no better than in England or France. Some good things they have done are in regard to women and children, medical attendance, etc. But they are being done in France also. You must be knowing that a famous fashionable aristocratic resort has now been given over to the working people in France.

N : Why then are Romain Rolland and others so enthusiastic about Russia?

SRI AUROBINDO : That is because they are Socialists. But even they are getting disillusioned now. Plenty of French workers went to Russia but came back disappointed. The same thing happened when Democracy came in. People thought there would be a lot of liberty but found that it was a delusion.

N : But formerly they were serving the Emperor and now they serve their own people.

SRI AUROBINDO : Certainly not. Where did you get that idea ? The emperor had nothing to do with the government. It was the capitalist class that ruled the country, and the same thing happens today, whatever the name you may give it. The whole thing is a fraud. It is impossible to change humanity by political machinery. It can't be done !

NOTE

Nirodbaran acknowledges the help given by A.B. Purani who has added a phrase or a sentence in some places in the record of these talks.

GUIDANCE FROM SRI AUROBINDO

THE PHYSICAL AND THE SUBCONSCIENT

Q. The other day you wrote: "That is the ordinary release from inertia, to begin a vital activity good or bad." Does it mean that when there is inertia it diffuses itself by creating vital activity?

SRI AUROBINDO : No. I mean that the Prakriti seeks relief from inertia by calling in vital rajas—that is the case in the ordinary movement of Nature.

18-3-1935

Q. Why is the subconscient so active at present?

SRI AUROBINDO : The subconscient difficulty is *the* difficulty now—because the whole struggle in the general sadhana is now there. It is in the subconscient, no longer in vital or conscious physical that the resistance is all massed together.

30-4-1935

Q. Two days back, when the inertia was no less intense than now I had pushed it out whenever it tried to get in. Why then today have I become so passive?

SRI AUROBINDO : It is the state of the mental will probably, that makes the difference.

21-7-1935

Q. Will you kindly elaborate the phrase about "the state of the mental will"?

SRI AUROBINDO : When the mental will acquiesces in the inertia, becomes passive to it, as we say—then one remains in the passive condition and there is no push against it until it of itself passes away. If the mental will or even the vital will or some dynamic part of the nature remains untouched and can react, then there is the effort to throw it off which may shorten the interim period.

22-7-1935

The tamas of the outer being, when the peace and silence take its place, takes refuge in the subconscient as its inertia and rises from there to invade the being.

25-7-1935

Q. What is really the nature of the present inertia? Is it directed against physical actions only?

SRI AUROBINDO : That was one of the forms; the other was a slowness to get rid of formed mental and vital and physical habits or formations; a slowness of the will to act etc.

25-7-1935

Q. What is the remedy for the increasing tamas? How to get rid of it even from the external being?

SRI AUROBINDO : More strength and force from above pouring into the inertia and not letting it be a habit. The dynamic will to draw that down always. 25-7-1935

Q. You pointed out the inner means to deal with the inertia. Are there no outer ways too which could be used even when one's separation is passive and the conscious parts veiled?

SRI AUROBINDO : I don't know of any effective outward means of getting rid of it. Some in hours when they cannot do sadhana, spend the time in other occupations—reading, writing or working—and do not try at all to concentrate. But I suspect what you need is more strength in the body. 29-7-1935

Q. The other day you wrote that some people have less of this tamas because of the good activity of their mind or vital. In which way good?

SRI AUROBINDO: I do not remember to have written "good"—but maybe I meant people who have either a clear and strong activity of the mind (the intellectuals) or an energetic vital being which rejects tamas. I was not speaking of anything moral or spiritual. 29-7-1936

Q. When one's inner peace and silence are not disturbed, then how does the inertia intrude into the physical and work so freely there ?

SRI AUROBINDO : It is not a question of the inner being, even of the inner physical. It is a question of the physical consciousness. The habit of tamas manifests itself in the very fact of the constant alternatives of experience and inertia. The principle of tamas is inertia, aprakash and apravritti shown here by its being unable to keep the prakash of the higher consciousness or answer continuously to the activity of sadhana—also by the rising up when it comes of sex etc. in a mechanical repetition of old ideas and feelings. It may be from the subconscient, but if the physical had not that habit of responding, it would have no hold. You would not be affected or feel yourself invaded or the sadhana stopped. 4-8-1935

Exactly. "The body felt fatigue"—that is what I mean by the habit of tamas. The body cannot bear the continuous experience, it feels it as a strain. That is the case with most sadhaks. But in your case the obstacle seems to develop a great intensity when it comes. I have already told you the means of getting rid of it, but it cannot be done in a day because it is a fixed habit of the nature and a fixed habit takes time to remove. But it can be done in not too long a time provided you don't get disturbed when it comes and deal with it firmly and steadily. 4-8-1935

One can bring down the strength, but it is also necessary to see that the body has sufficient food, sleep and rest—absence of these things strain the nerves and if the nerves are strained the body feels fatigue—becomes weakened.
4-8-1935

Q. The subconscient is throwing its dirt over many parts. Is it because a detachment from the mind itself is necessary that the difficulty seems greater than that of vital and physical activities?

SRI AUROBINDO: Certainly, without detachment from the mind that movement would be difficult to get rid of. 5-8-1935

If the mind gets tired, naturally it is difficult to concentrate—unless you have become separated from the mind. 6-8-1935

You have to separate yourself from the mind also. You have to feel yourself even in the mental, vital, physical levels (not only above) a consciousness that is neither mind, life, nor body. 7-8-1935

From NAGIN DOSHI

SRI AUROBINDO ON INDIA'S DESTINY

SWARAJ AND THE COMING ANARCHY[1]

(It was not merely in politics that India had begun to show signs of a new life. There was a visible change coming over her social institutions, her economic organisation. These were signs that the renaissance of a mighty people was at hand, of which political liberty was to be the first necessary condition and a transformation of the world the ultimate goal).

WHOEVER tries to read the signs of the time, will be no little perplexed at first by their complexity. The beginnings of a great revolution which is destined to change the whole political, social and economic life of a great country, are always full of ebb and flow, perplexing by the multitude of details and their continual interaction. The struggle going on at Tuticorin exemplifies this remarkable diversity and intermingling of numerous tendencies each of which would in ordinary times be a separate movement.

Society is full of anomalies which clash and jostle together in an inextricable chaos of progress and reaction; economic India is in the throes of a violent transition from the old medieval basis of life to the modern; politics is at a parting of the ways. All these various and independent activities of the Indian body politic unite into a huge and confused movement of which the main impulse is political and the others are largely inspired, if not motived, by the passions which are at the root of the political upheaval. Great issues of economics wear the guise of a political conflict; immense political aspirations become mixed up with a purely industrial struggle between indigenous labour and foreign capital. So also in society, the old reform movement which was a separate and ineffectual attempt to transform our society according to European ideas, has given place to disquiet and aspiration in the society itself.

So long the educated men of the upper castes debated among themselves about the better ordering of society, and outside Bengal and the Punjab it was no better than an academic dispute on the Social Conference platform or between the reforming and orthodox Press. Even in Bengal and the Punjab the movement was sectional, a revolt of a small minority of the educated few, and did not touch the heart of the people. So far as society as a whole was affected, it was by the new environment of the nineteenth century bringing an irresistible

[1] *Bandemataram*, Weekly Edition, 8. 3. 1908.

pressure to bear on its outworks, and sometimes by the force of economic necessity born of the modern conditions of India under British rule. The change was from outside and therefore injurious rather than beneficial, for an organism is doomed which, incapable of changing from within, answers only to the pressure of environment.

But this immobile state of Hindu society has now begun to pass away and we see the beginning of a profound and incalculable life in the heart of the great organism. Yesterday we hardly needed to reckon with the lower strata of society in our political life; today they are beginning to live, to move, to have a dim inarticulate hope and to grope for air and room. That is a sign of the coming social revolution in which neither the conservative forces of society nor the liberal sympathies of the educated few will have much voice. The forces are being unprisoned, will upheave the whole of our society with a volcanic force and the shape it will take after the eruption is over does not depend on the wishes or the wisdom of men. These social stirrings also are mingling with the political unrest to increase the confusion. The question of the Namsudras[1] in Bengal has become a political as well as a social problem and in other parts of the country also the line between politics and social questions is threatened with obliteration.

The future is not in our hands. When so huge a problem stares us in the face, we become conscious of the limits of human discernment and wisdom. We at once feel that the motions of humanity are determined by forces and not by individuals and that the intellect and experience of statesmen are merely instruments in the hands of the Power which manifests itself in those great incalculable forces. In ordinary times, we are apt to forget this and to account for all that happens as the result of this statesman's foresight or that genius' dynamic personality. But in times like the present we find it less easy to shut our eyes to the truth. We do not affect to believe, therefore, that we can discover any solution of these great problems or any sure line of policy by which the tangled issues of so immense a movement can be kept free from the possibility of inextricable anarchy in the near future.

Anarchy will come. This peaceful and inert nation is going to be rudely awakened from a century of passivity and flung into a world-shaking turmoil out of which it will come transformed, strengthened and purified. There is a chaos which is the result of inertia and the prelude of death, and this was the state of India during the last century. The British peace of the last fifty years was like the quiet green grass and flowers covering the corruption of a sepulchre. There is another chaos which is the violent reassertion of life and it is this chaos into which India is being hurried today. We cannot repine at the change, but

[1] One of the "untouchable" groups.

are rather ready to welcome the pangs which help the storm which purifies, the destruction which renovates.

One thing only we are sure of, and one thing we wear as a life-belt which will buoy us up on the waves of the chaos that is coming on the land. This is the fixed and unalterable faith in an overruling Purpose which is raising India once more from the dead, the fixed and unalterable intention to fight for the renovation of her ancient life and glory. Swaraj is the life-belt, Swaraj is the pilot, Swaraj the star of guidance. If a great social revolution is necessary, it is because the ideal of Swaraj cannot be accomplished by a nation bound to forms which are no longer expressive of the ancient and immutable Self of India. She must change the rags of the past so that her beauty may be readorned. She must alter her bodily appearance so that her soul may be newly expressed. We need not fear that any change will turn her into a second-hand Europe. Her individuality is too mighty for such a degradation, her soul too calm and self-sufficient for such a surrender.

If again an economical revolution is inevitable, it is because the fine but narrow edifice of her old industrial life will not allow of Swaraj in commerce and industry. The industrial energies of a free and perfect national life demand a mightier scope and wider channels. Neither need we fear that the economic revolution will land us in the same diseased and disordered state of society as now offends the nobler feelings of humanity in Europe. India can never so far forget the teaching which is her life and the secret of her immortality as to become a replica of the organised selfishness, cruelty and greed which is dignified in the West by the name of Industry. She will create her own conditions, find out the secret of order which Socialism in vain struggles to find and teach the peoples of the earth once more how to harmonise the world and the spirit.

If we realise this truth, if we perceive in all that is happening a great and momentous transformation necessary not only for us but for the whole world, we shall fling ourselves without fear or misgivings into the times which are upon us. India is the *guru* of the nations, the physician of the human soul in its profounder maladies; she is destined once more to new-mould the life of the world and restore the peace of the human spirit. But Swaraj is the necessary condition of her work and before she can do the work, she must fulfil the condition.

Compiled by SANAT K. BANERJI

SRI AUROBINDO ASHRAM

The Ashram Atmosphere

Now I come to a somewhat difficult part of our study : how the central aim is being worked out in the Ashram. An inner revolution is not like an outer which comes like a storm and passes off. It is much more subtle and far-reaching in its effect.

There is no preaching here, the very atmosphere of the Ashram is surcharged with the Master's teaching. When one is accepted as a disciple he is not initiated into any *mantra* or asked to follow a set yogic discipline. The Ashram does not follow any religious creed, tradition or convention. It is from the atmosphere one has to choose and take the course of his sadhana. Further, it is the atmosphere of the Ashram that strikes a visitor first of all. So let us begin with this striking feature.

To quote the reaction of a man of international fame, M. F. Rueff, President of the International Council of Philosophy and Humanistic Sciences, who visited the Ashram in 1952 : "The memory of my visit is marked by three dominant experiences : beauty, fervour, intelligence. The ambience of serene beauty that reigns there is indeed unforgettable.... All who work there have in their eyes such joy, such serenity, such devotion to their work that one feels it springing from their inner life.

"For those who try to penetrate into Sri Aurobindo's thought it is impos sible not to be struck by certain profound consonances with Bergson's thought, notably that of creative evolution. I will go so far as to say that certain aspects of Bergson's thought are for me illumined and enriched by the study of Sri Aurobindo's works and by the interpretation given to me verbally by his disciples who have so deeply entered into his spirit.

"If India is the country where the secrets of the soul are hidden, the Ashram is certainly in India, the place where one can best approach them and become ready to discover them.

"It is said that at a certain age one never revisits the places one has loved. If however I could make a wish, I would want to have the chance of entering more deeply into the discipline of the Ashram to get at the secret which gives to the disciples that beautiful look by which I have been so much struck."

No child is made to practise the yoga here, but he imbibes it from the atmosphere. Children breathe the air in which they are nourished and that forms their nature. Even the uncultured soon acquire a sense of beauty by the touch of the Ashram atmosphere.

The pervading peace, the inner delight, the silent stream of spontaneous ananda.... What is the mystery behind these things that are so evident in the atmosphere of the Ashram ?

The answer is to be sought in the fact that the cause of happiness lies in the inner development and not in the acquisition of material things. If the real joy of life depended on the satisfaction of egoistic desires and external needs, then worldly men loaded with material things would not have pined for peace. The source of happiness is inner peace, which radiates through the purity of the *ādhār*. The light of joy which is reflected on the countenances of the younger generation here is the outcome of its inner development, the inherent power of Sri Aurobindo's *tapaścaryā* and the Mother's universal love and luminous personality. It is this power and this love that save everyone here from the fire which consumes the world.

An American journalist said, "We can never find fault with an institution where the atmosphere is so charged with Ananda." Dr. K.R. Srinivas Iyengar, the first biographer of Sri Aurobindo (in English), says : "The stray responsive visitor to the Yoga-Ashram at Pondicherry is sure to sniff at once the 'atmosphere' of the place—its feeling for rhythm and its sense of harmony, its mellowed lights and its whispered sweetnesses, its enveloping peace and its soul-elevating piety. The complicated wheels of the Ashram—as complicated as are the process and concerns of Nature—nevertheless revolve unseen, almost as effortlessly and unconsciously as they do in the seething world of Nature. The Ashram is but the rough sketch of the Promised Land,—just a few dots and dashes and shapely curves,—but even then one can discover in them the vague configurations, the confident commencement, of 'a new Heaven and a new Earth'."

To feel the Mother's influence and to profit by it the minimum need is a bit of sensibility and responsiveness.

Q : "I feel that when the Mother comes down to give meditation in the Meditation Hall, the atmosphere of the Hall extends to all the Ashram Houses. Am I right in my feeling ?"

SRI AUROBINDO : "It is natural that it should be so as the Mother, when she concentrates on the inner work, is accustomed spontaneously to spread her consciousness over the whole Ashram. So to anyone who is sensitive, it must be felt anywhere in the Ashram, though perhaps more strongly in the nearer houses on an occasion like the evening meditation." (7-11-1934)

"...Every house in which the sadhaks of the Ashram live is in the Ashram precincts."

"...The action of the Mother in the meditation is at once collective and individual. She is trying to bring down the right consciousness in the atmosphere of the Ashram—for the action of the mind and vital of the sadhaks does not create a general atmosphere."

What the Ashram had been before the advent of the Mother and what it became afterwards can be seen from Sri Aurobindo's own words :

Q : "X seems to have told Y that the old sadhaks who were here before the Mother took up the work in 1926, had many experiences of the Cosmic Consciousness and the sadhana was much better and more serious than now. How far is this true ?"

SRI AUROBINDO : "Before the Mother came all were living in the mind with only some mental realisations and experiences. The vital and everything else were unregenerate and the psychic behind the veil. I am not aware that anyone of them at that time entered the cosmic consciousness. At that time I was still seeking my way for the transformation and the passage to the Supramental (all the part of the yoga that goes beyond the ordinary Vedanta) and acted very much on a principle of *laissez faire* with the few sadhaks who were there. X is one of those who have never ceased regretting that *laissez faire*—he regrets the vital liberty and absence of discipline they then had." (27-7-1934)

How the Mother has awakened us to self-discipline, and made us discipline-minded, filling the air with the spirit of dedication, laying more and more stress upon sincerity to one's inner call, correcting our attitude of approach to the Divine—this is an achievement possible only to the Mother. It is the foundation stone on which the ever-growing structure of the Ashram is being built. Now everyone has to imbibe everything from the atmosphere and proceed according to his opening and aspiration.

It is not given to all to win the hearts of others. Could fifteen hundred heads remain ever bent before one who could not win their hearts ? Without that, could inner beings remain athirst for a smile on her lips, for a ray of light, for a particle of her grace ? Can external checks and controls, rules and regulations bring about the spirit of worshipful submission which finds its fulfilment in absolute surrender, the crowning achievement of life ?

To D the Mother had said that she had to frame some rules simply because no institution could possibly be run or any kind of corporate life be held together without some laws laid down for general guidance. "But," she added, "I do mean it when I say that I would have no rules at all if the Ashram could be run without them. But I am wide awake and have always held that all rules should come from within. So I never consent to formulating more rules or codes of general conduct than are absolutely necessary and minimum."

Yet a discipline is there, not easy to define, not external but inly binding on all.

When a youth, newly turned to spirituality, felt it difficult to carry out so many instructions of X through whom he had come here, the Master wrote :

"X has said these things in order to help you and put you in the right way. A certain inner and outer discipline is necessary in order that one may grow into the spirit of the yoga and the natural cupidity of the vital cannot be a

guide to action there. One has to perceive what one should or should not do and impose this discipline on oneself; for that X's advice and guidance can be of great help to you." (20-10-1936)

The Mother's way of working is quite her own :

"Mastery means to know how to deal with certain vibrations.... To master something, a movement, for example, means, by your simple presence, without any word, any explanation, to replace a bad vibration by the true one. By means of the word, by means of explanation and discussion, even a certain emanation of force, you exert an influence upon another, but you do not master the movement. Mastery over a movement is the capacity to set against the vibration of the movement a stronger, truer vibration that can stop the other vibration.

"If words are necessary to explain a certain thing, then you have not the true knowledge. If I have to speak out all that I mean to say in order to make you understand, then I have not the mastery, it is simply that I exercise an influence upon your intelligence and help you to understand, awaken in you the desire to know, to discipline yourself etc. But if I am not able, simply by looking at you, without saying anything, to make you enter the light that will make you understand well, I have not mastered the state of ignorance."[1]

We feel tempted to reproduce here a letter from the pen of the great Bengali littérateur, Sarat Chandra Chatterji. It refers to Barindra's reaction to the Ashram discipline and to his feeling about the Mother as he had seen her when he was here in the twenties (1920-29) :

"I often meet Barin these days. He says he will not turn his face again towards Pondicherry. He wonders how he could remain caged in so long under such rigorous discipline ! But in the depths of his heart he has intense devotion for your Mother. He says that it is hardly possible to meet a personality like hers. Her power of subtle vision, says he, is unequalled. Her capacity for action is as high as her intellect and inner faculty of maintaining discipline. Problems of every sadhak are always before her eyes..."[2]

(Sarat Chandra's letters)

An extract from Ajit Sur's article in the *Basumati* (a Calcutta Bengali daily) of 19 Srawan 1366 B.E. regarding Barin's last wish, though not relevant here, will be of interest :—

"Of late there has been a longing in me to see Sri Aurobindo. Many of those who see visions have seen him after his passing but I have never happened to see him with these physical eyes.

"Only yesterday as I was trying in my sick-bed to concentrate a little, to my surprise, I saw a flood of light filling my room and in a corner I saw Sri

[1] *The Bulletin.*

[2] *Sarat Patrawali* (in Hindi).

Aurobindo in a luminous figure. I seemed to perceive that he made a sign with his hand as if by way of a call. After that his brilliant form slowly disappeared. At that time I felt free from the agony of my sufferings."

Now to revert to our point.

One must bear in mind that nothing is imposed on us. "I believe," repeats the Mother in one of her recent writings, "more in the power of the atmosphere and of the example than in any rigorous teaching. I rely more on the thing that awakes in the being by contagion than by a regulated, disciplined effort.

"Perhaps after all something is preparing and one day it will leap forth outside. That is my hope."[1] Long ago, Sri Aurobindo wrote: "Always behave as if the Mother was looking at you, for she is indeed always present."

The Mother confirms the fact : "...I am with you in a very concrete manner and they who have a subtle vision can see me.

"In a general way my force is there constantly at work, constantly shifting the psychological elements of your being to put them in new relation, defining to yourself the different facets of your nature so that you may see what should be changed, developed, rejected."[2]

Here are some illustrations.

On a Dewali occasion, when fireworks are the rage, a small boy of the infant section of the Ashram School invited another of his age to such play. The latter said, "But Mother doesn't like it."

"Mother is not here now."

"She is everywhere and She sees everything."

And there rested the matter.

A girl of nine, at table, was asked about some food not cooked well, "Do you like the dish ?"

"I like everything. Mother has made everything."

On another occasion when her aunt was talking of some trouble, the girl spoke out : "Talk always of joy, not of trouble."

"I do have trouble—how can I help it ?"

"Why, call upon the Divine. Whatever you will ask He will give."

"I want neither gold nor joy but the Divine. Where can I see Him ?"

"In the photo."

"He does not talk nor hear our cry."

"If you have devotion he will come out of the photo. I have read so in my books."

All eyes at once turned to her in speechless wonder and admiration.

[1] *Bulletin of Physical Education*, November, 1958, p. 123.

[2] February, 1958, p. 75.

A sadhak playfully asked a small girl of under five, 'Well, will you tell me how to meditate ?'

"Yes," came the reply. "Sit down properly, not in a shuffling way, think of nothing, only call the Mother in silence."

It is common experience that any deviation at once causes a reaction. Every moment one is tested how far one is siding with the light of the truth or running counter to it.

Once when a person passed some remarks about the Ashram, a sadhak spoke something in the same vein. At once he heard a voice in his heart in a challenging tone—"You also speak like that ?" Then and there he became conscious of his folly.

A visitor from Bombay used to ask whomsoever he met to tell him something of his experience, what he had gained by his stay here. He was a businessman—so a sadhak took him to another businessman, connected with the Ashram for a fairly long time. He was about one hour with him and returned overwhelmed. What struck him most was to find that the gentleman was staying sometimes in Calcutta and sometimes in Madras, carrying on business in both places, yet his heart was full to the brim of faith. Faith is the subtle presence of God himself. If faith is there, what cannot one aspire after and achieve ?

"Work is an enjoyment, a pleasure," observed the second businessman, "if you know how to remain care-free. Since everything belongs to the Mother, why should you worry ?

"Any step in the wrong direction will at once create an uneasiness, an unpleasantness. You must step back and correct yourself. If you don't mind the inner alarm-bell and go on repeating the same mistakes, you may feel a prick in the consciousness but you won't feel the same uneasiness as before. Then you go on doing whatever you like, there is no one to check or hinder you. Sincerity demands absolute frankness and complete exposure of one's inner as well as outer being to the Mother."

NARAYAN PRASAD

MEMORIES AND MUSINGS

I WENT WITH TWO.....

I WENT with two of my friends to the Prime Minister's house. While I waited for him, I walked round, looking at a picture or a photograph on the wall or a vase or an Indonesian doll. On the back verandah facing green and extensive grounds, a big group of people sat waiting for him. I slowly strolled towards those grounds. Across a paved pathway, two beautiful Pavalmalli (Parifatak) trees stood crosswise. The pink stone path and the garden lawn were carpeted with waxlike white and orange flowers.

I took a handful of those flowers and stood there a long while with a sense of quiet happiness, I felt like that legendary princess who had knelt by the flowers and offered them to Buddha without plucking them. A shower of white and orange flowers ! Purity and refinement. Tinge of children's hands and feet, and beautiful women's long white fingers. And I said to myself, "What a beautiful memory of this morning and these flowers I shall take back with me !"

Looking at that carpet of flowers I recalled a Japanese story defining perfection. An old man said to his son, "We are going to hold a feast on this day, six months hence. I give you these six months to prepare for it. Go and make ready for the feast. See that everything is perfect." And the son bowed and said, "Father, it shall be done according as you wish."

He had the mansion cleaned and the floors polished. The paintings were hung in ther proper places. And there were things of jade and porcelain, and ceramics. And tall vases of blue and red and white. The garden was in splendour and the lawns soft and green. At the end of the term, the son went to the father and said, "Father, come and examine your house. Everything is ready and perfect." The father went round with his son. The house was, indeed, well arranged and with taste. He went to the garden and found that it was clean and orderly. And the old man still did not look quite pleased. The son said, "Are you not pleased, father ? Is not everything perfect ?". And the father smiled and said, "Come with me, my son, and I will show you what perfection is."

And he went to a cherry blossom tree and gently shook a branch. And the flowers rained in a shower and the clean green lawn was covered pink and white. The old man looked at his son with a smile in his eyes and said, "Now, my son, this is perfection."

As I stood there thus enchanted, two men in khaki clothes came. And they had big brooms in their hands. At once they began sweeping the flowers. They swept with swift hard strokes, for the flowers lay thick on the green grass. And a big man with red eyes and black beard and a suspicious look came there and shook the trees one by one. A number of butterflies flew out from the trees and some squirrels leapt down. And still that man shook the trees and the two men in khaki swept and swept. At the end of it, they gathered the flowers in a sack and went away.

And I stood there as though under a spell. The little pathway was spotless and the green lawn clean. My dream of perfection was no more. A slow sadness came over me. I looked at the trees. A few flowers still hung between the branches and leaves, as though hiding from that man of suspicious look.

And then I met the Prime Minister, talked to him a while and came away with sadness in my heart, and flowers in my hand.

How Wonderful...

How wonderful it would be if God were to ask me, "Would you like to be a tree ?" And I would start dreaming in my heart of all the beautiful trees that I can remember.

I would think of a great tree spreading out its huge large branches like giant arms outstretched. And of a rounded shady tree like a vast umbrella. And one that gives rest and peace and cool comfort to those who would but care to have it. And a tree that bends low with the burden of its coloured fruits filled with juice and taste at their core. I would think of a tree which is full of hard berries inviting little school children and village urchins. And one that is laden with small fruits red and orange and yellow and gold in great profusion though you cannot eat them for they are bitter and have poison instead of sweet juice. I would think of it because it is beautiful all the same and more so since the fruits hang on it like little gems and gleam warmly in the sun. Nobody takes them away and they remain there a long long time so that it looks like a tree in a miniature painting under which traditional lovers hold secret trysts.

I would think of a burgeoning tree covered completely with white and red and pink blossoms, looking so pure and perfect with a blue sky behind. And one with burnt-umber-tinted stems holding great bunches of yellow blossoms. And one whose coral sprays are so many that no one can see the colour or contour of its branches. And one with an extravagant abundance of lavender sprays. And one with luxurious vermilion-gold flowers shaped like birds or butterflies that cannot fly but may only sway tremblingly in the breeze. Beholding them, I feel utter amazement. And I would think of a tree with dark-burning scarlet flowers which are more like offspring of fire than of earth, so much so that I have often feared they might set fire to a whole forest with their flames.

I would think of a tree that welcomes little birds and big birds to make their nests of leaves and twigs and soft grass. And one in whom song-birds and squirrels dwell. And one where a butterfly with stains on its wings makes love to a pure white flower and a black bee sits intoxicated inside a large thin yellow flower.

I would think of a tree which has many magics and cures for the ailing and a tree under which the ancients laid their sick for days together to breathe healing scents that gave back health.

I would think of a tall tree that looks up to heaven in an attitude of prayer, or one that looks like a slender girl standing with a tall pitcher on her head, and a curious one with a head shaven like that of a Buddhist monk or with just a little tuft like that of an orthodox Hindu priest. And one that stands by the water and bending low admiringly looks at its own reflection. And a tree whose leaves make music in the wind or rustling sounds like that of the silken skirts of high-born ladies. And one that stands by the sea-side and between its own whistlings listens to the swish of the sea. And I would think of all the trees good and useful to humanity.

Why, there are so many, it makes me dumb to think of them. And they are all so beautiful, so good, I would not know which one I should be. Perhaps it were best if I just sat and dreamt of all the trees in the world that I have met or known.

But I think I know what tree I would like to be. I would want to be a lightning-struck barren tree with scorched branches. A tree without leaf, without flower, without life! Struck down, and burnt so by the hand of God. And I would kneel before Him and pray:

"Make me your barren tree, O God, since it is a tree your hands have touched, and it is the sole substance of all trees. Make me a barren tree, my God, bared of bird, leaf and all—only grant me this, a horizon to stand against."

CHANDRALEKHA

SIGNPOSTS AND SYMBOLS

"VINGT-ET-UNS"

AUTHOR'S NOTE

The poems came to the writer some two decades ago; revised recently, they are now being serially published in batches of twos.

The pieces number Twenty-One in all; and each of them comprises of just Twenty One lines : hence the cryptic sub-title "Vingt-et-uns".

Apart from their recondite value as psychological signposts in the growth of the writer's being, the poems might presumably provide amusing and useful material for aesthetic enquiry—as to the adequacy or otherwise of the novel mould into which spiritual experience is here sought to be cast and the technique-mode governing the multilateral symbolism thereof.

Incidentally, the writer knows only now that 'Vingt-et-un' is a gambling card-game; and that knowledge imparts to him the hope that his successful (?) gamble with the new Form may well inspire other lovers of the Muse to try their hand at this new Form-and-Game and come off with better windfalls!

9

WHO ever dreamt when from the steaming plains
We sent envoys of fondest hopes up heights,
That even these citadels of hoar dignity
Would greet our royal, long-suffering, Lear-like selves
With brazen blatancy of weather and wind ?
List ! the shrill whistles answer us from the hills,
And darksome messages flash from every side—
Bringing us ado of seeking roofs and fires,
When fires themselves are in dire league with all !
Ah, who shall stir, frost-jammed, to rake them up ?—
And impish blasts that proffer to rake for us
Fly sparks in our face and roar, but mocking, past !

O that we joined them all and mocked, ourselves,
Our cringing littleness and craven attempts to eke
Self-seeking snugness, while mighty Forces stir
And elements dance to Rudra's rising thuds,
Treading down weakness and weakening shelter-walls !
O that we heralded these Bhairava-revelries,
Felt Kali's laughter tingling down our nerves,
And kindled Fire Primeval once more in our carcasses old !

10

A nameless heaviness weighs upon this heart !
It heaves and heaves, poor thing, sad, weary, slow,
Beating reluctant timing at Life's Feast,
As if vast maze of sense-wed marionettes
Pressed all too strangely on its retiring ways :
Or the sharp turns of waltz and jazzic flares
Sorted ajar with its love of lingering dreams :
Or veriest Dreams, close-jostling into the hall,
Bore too much of fancyware at its narrow doors :
And the poor pensioner, with no purse to buy,
Felt all too sorely its moribund links with life.

Or is it the growing sense of Infinite Life,
Dim-glimpsed through avenues of brooding hours
And tasted in chalices rare, eternity-brewed,
With endless vistas of multi-mirroring Lights
And super-symphonies keying up spirit within ?
Is it the keen sting our wan mortality feels
When it touches first the skirts of Immortal Life ?—
A sting that endues both pain and power at once,
Smiting—awhile—to beebite-heaviness,
So intimate springs subliminal are smit coursing free to LIFE ?

CHIMANBHAI

COME DOWN...

COME down into this earthly life,
Stab deep the darkness with thy piercing blade, O heavenly knife!
White blood from the night's wounded breast
Will sprinkle high and all around;
Will bathe the mountain crest
And the soft grassy ground.
O fountain of the light profound !
Mourn not, O darkness, thy doom.
To be enveloped by heart's white is not death,
Nor is the all-pervading light thy tomb.
Thou art the Eternal's creating breath.
And the slumber of Heaven's hope beneath.

CHUNILAL CHOWDHURY

THUS SANG MY SOUL

VII. MOTHERING THE BOND OF LOVE : PRAYERS AND PRAISES

(Continued)

66. O BESTOWER OF LOVE!

MOTHER, how can I vaunt
To be worthy of Thy love ?
What qualities in Thy service
I stir and spur to move ?

It is Thy Love's great gift,
My heart its depths can raise
To be Thy Love's meek bearer
And vassal of Thy Grace.

Make it my sole occupation
To more and more acquire
Thy boundless flow of Love
Of purifying fire.

O let my praying body's
One aspiration be :
Never I tread a light
That does not lead to Thee.

What a wonder is Thy Grace !
Though of no worth I am
Yet Thou preparest me
To be Thy lion and lamb.

(To be continued)

HAR KRISHAN SINGH

THOUGHTS

IN my callow days whenever I discovered that I had been betrayed I would get ready to fly at the betrayer's throat.

Late I came to realise that right from my birth I have been betraying myself far more than anybody else could.

In that case should not I clutch my own throat? No doubt I should. But I am unable to do it; I recoil from doing it.

And my Guru whose heart is more tender than a flower and harder than flint goes on admonishing me in these words: "This recoil will clog thy feet. Root it out completely. Thou must be prepared to throttle thyself cheerfully."

* *

We are neither spiritual, nor are we powerful. All the teeming problems spring from this. Be spiritual, be powerful, all your problems will find their solution.

We do not possess knowledge; we do not have devotion; that is why there is so much sterile wrangling among intellectuals. For that reason, too, we exhibit our love with such flamboyance.

The man who possesses true knowledge communicates his profoundest ideas but through silence.

The man of devotion proffers the immortalising Nectar but in such a way that it is known to none but the ministrant and the recipient.

Wisdom scatters fragrance by blossoming like a flower.

It does not swish or rustle when it meets another flower.

Devotion flows out like water from a hidden spring. It is not put on for display.

* *

Do you expect the Lord of the seven worlds to come to your door by a mere verbal invitation?

That can never happen.

To invite Him to your house you should yourself go in the perfect humility of the soul carrying with you the palanquin of your pure heart for Him.

GIRDHARLAL

(Translated from the Author's Gujarati book 'Uparāma')

HOW THE MOTHER'S GRACE CAME TO US

Reminiscences of Various People in Touch with the Mother

It was at 4-30 a.m. on Monday the 12th September, 1960, that I was informed by my Factory In-charge on the Tea Estate that the bearings of my Ruston engine were getting very hot and smoke was coming out. I had another engine but that too had been lying out of order for some time past. I was very much perturbed. By chance my Engineer and Fitter were also out of station. Generally my factory remains closed on every Monday but this time, as I was behind in the plucking round, I engaged workers to pluck on Sunday and so I had to run the factory on Monday as well. It appeared that the green tea-leaves would have to be thrown away, causing a tremendous loss. I could not find any way to solve this problem except to pray for the Grace of the Mother.

I directed the Factory In-charge to continue running the engine in whatever condition it might be. I had full confidence in the Grace of the Mother which had worked miracles on many occasions whenever I had invoked it. The factory In-charge continued running the engine according to my instructions.

I sat down in my bed with the *Flame of White Light* (Prayers of T. Kapali Sastri to the Mother) in my hands. I started repeating the prayer given on the last page of the book.

During the whole day the bearings which had got very hot and emitted smoke were found working as if nothing had happened to them. After the manufacturing was over, the engine was opened up. The metallic substance had left its position at many places and the bearings were completely burnt up almost everywhere. In spite of all these defects the engine had given satisfactory service. No machine under ordinary circumstances could have worked in such a condition.

Sitaram Agrawal

(Compiled by Har Krishan Singh)

THE LIFE DIVINE OF SRI AUROBINDO: ITS LEADING PRINCIPLES AND CONCEPTS

(Classified Excerpts)

SECTION II — THE NATURE OF THE ABSOLUTE

(Continued)

(xiii) SPIRIT

IF we assert only pure Spirit and a mechanical unintelligent substance or energy, calling one God or Soul and the other Nature, the inevitable end will be that we shall either deny God or else turn from Nature.[1]

In a sense, the whole of creation may be said to be a movement between two involutions, Spirit in which all is involved and out of which all evolves downward to the other pole of Matter, Matter in which also all is involved and out of which all evolves upward to the other pole of Spirit.[2]

When Science discovers that Matter resolves itself into forms of Energy, it has hold of a universal and fundamental truth; and when philosophy discovers that Matter only exists as substantial appearance to the consciousness and that the one reality is Spirit or pure conscious Being, it has hold of a greater and completer, a still more fundamental truth.[3]

...it is the immortal and infinite Spirit that has veiled itself in the dense robe of material substance and works there by the supreme creative power of Supermind, permitting the divisions of Mind and the reign of the lowest or material principle only as initial conditions for a certain evolutionary play of the One in the Many.[4]

We see that the Absolute, the Self, the Divine, the Spirit, the Being is One, the Transcendental is one, the Cosmic is one: but we see also that beings are many and each has a self, a spirit, a like yet different nature. And since the spirit and essence of things is one, we are obliged to admit that all these many must be that One, and it follows that the One is or has become many....[5]

There is a mind in us, there is a soul and spirit, and our life has no true value if it has not in it a growing consciousness, a developing mind, and if life and mind are not an expression, an instrument, a means of liberation and fulfilment for the soul, the indwelling Spirit.[6]

...the Spirit who embodies Himself in cosmic Mind and Life and Matter and of whom Nature is the self of energy so that all she seems to create is the Self and Spirit variously manifested in His own being to His own conscious force for the delight of His various existence,—this is the truth of being to which

man's knowledge of Nature and cosmos is leading him and which he will reach when his Nature-knowledge unites itself with his God-knowledge.[7]

If we admit the existence of a cosmic Spirit, the Energy must be spiritual; life and mind must be independent products of a spiritual energy and themselves powers of manifestation of the Spirit. It then becomes irrational to suppose that Spirit and Matter alone exist, that they are the two confronting realities and that Matter is the sole possible basis of the manifestation of spirit; the idea of a sole material world becomes immediately untenable. Spirit must be capable of basing its manifestation on the Mind-principle or on the Life-principle and not only on the principle of Matter; there can then be and logically there should be worlds of Mind and worlds of Life; there may even be worlds founded on a subtler and more plastic, more conscious principle of Matter.[8]

For the self of the gnostic being will not be the mental ego but the Spirit that is one in all; he will see the world as a universe of the Spirit.[9]

(xiv) THE INFINITE (AND THE LOGIC OF THE INFINITE)

Mind cannot possess the infinite, it can only suffer it or be possessed by it; it can only lie blissfully helpless under the luminous shadow of the Real cast down on it from planes of existence beyond its reach. The possession of the Infinite cannot come except by an ascent to those Supramental planes, nor the knowledge of it except by an inert submission of Mind to the descending messages of the Truth-conscious Reality.[10]

The Infinite would not be the Infinite if it could not assume a manifold finiteness...[11]

An experience of some one aspect of the Infinite is valid in itself; but we cannot generalise from it that the Infinite is that alone, nor would it be safe to view the rest of the Infinite in terms of that aspect and exclude all other view-points of spiritual experience. The Infinite is at once an essentiality, a boundless totality and a multitude; all these have to be known in order to know truly the Infinite.[12]

The Infinite is illimitably free, free to determine itself infinitely, free from all restraining effects of its own creations. In fact the Infinite does not create, it manifests what is in itself, in its own essence of reality; it is itself that essence of all reality and all realities are powers of that one Reality.[13]

Again, we see that there is an infinite pure status and immobile silence of the Spirit; we see too that there is a boundless movement of the Spirit, a power, a dynamic spiritual all-containing self-extension of the Infinite. Our conceptions foist upon this perception, in itself valid and accurate, an opposition between the silence and status and the dynamis and movement, but to the

reason and the logic of the Infinite there can be no such opposition. A solely silent and static Infinite, an Infinite without an infinite power and dynamis and energy is inadmissible except as the perception of an aspect; a powerless Absolute, an impotent Spirit is unthinkable : an infinite energy must be the dynamis of the Infinite, an all-power must be the potency of the Absolute, an illimitable force must be the force of the Spirit. But the silence, the status are the basis of the movement, an eternal immobility is the necessary condition, field, essence even, of the infinite mobility, a stable being is the condition and foundation of the vast action of the Force of being. It is when we arrive at something of this silence, stability, immobility that we can base on it a force and energy which in our superficial restless state would be inconceivable. The opposition we make is mental and conceptual; in reality, the silence of the Spirit and the dynamis of the Spirit are complementary truths and inseparable.[14]

There is no division of the One by the appearance of the finite, for it is the one Infinite that appears to us as the many finite : the creation adds nothing to the Infinite; it remains after creation what it was before. The Infinite is not a sum of things, it is That which is all things and more. If this logic of the Infinite contradicts the conceptions of our finite reason, it is because it exceeds it and does not base itself on the data of the limited phenomenon, but embraces the Reality and sees the truth of all phenomena in the truth of the Reality...[15]

To understand truly the world-process of the Infinite and the Time-process of the Eternal, the consciousness must pass beyond this finite reason and the finite sense to a larger reason and spiritual sense in touch with the consciousness of the Infinite and responsive to the logic of the Infinite which is the very logic of being itself and arises inevitably from its self-operation of its own realities, a logic whose sequences are not the steps of thought but the steps of existence.[16]

(XV) THE ETERNAL

In each of these, plant, animal, man, god, the Eternal is there containing and repressing himself as it were in order to make a certain statement of his being. Each is the whole Eternal concealed.[17]

But if the individual is a persistent reality, an eternal portion or power of the Eternal, if his growth of consciousness is the means by which the Spirit in things discloses its being, the cosmos reveals itself as a conditioned manifestation of the play of the eternal One in the being of Sachchidananda with the eternal Many. Then, secure behind all the changings of our personality, upholding the stream of its mutations, there must be a true Person, a real spiritual Individual, a true Purusha.[18]

The last or highest emergence is the liberated man who has realised the Self and Spirit within him, entered into the cosmic consciousness, passed into union

with the Eternal and, so far as he still accepts life and action, acts by the light and energy of the Power within him working through his human instruments of Nature.[19]

(XVI) THE TIMELESS

The cosmic manifestation of the Timeless takes place in the successions of Time : its forms must therefore be temporary in their appearance on the surface, but they are eternal in their essential power of manifestation; for they are held always implicit and potential in the essence of things and in the essential consciousness from which they emerge : timeless consciousness can always turn their abiding potentiality into terms of time actuality.[20]

There is the unmanifest and there is the manifestation, but a manifestation of the Real must itself be real; there is the Timeless and there is the process of things in Time, but nothing can appear in Time unless it has a basis in the timeless Reality. If my self and spirit are real, my thoughts, feelings, powers of all kinds, which are its expressions, cannot be unreal; my body, which is the form it puts out in itself and which at the same time it inhabits, cannot be a nothing or a mere unsubstantial shadow. The only reconciling explanation is that timeless eternity and time eternity are two aspects of the Eternal and Absolute and both are real, but in a different order of reality : what is unmanifest in the Timeless manifests itself in Time; each thing that exists is real in its own degree of the manifestation and is so seen by the consciousness of the Infinite.[21]

(XVII) THE SELF-EXISTENT

The Self-existent is the Infinite and its way of being and of action must be the way of the Infinite, but our consciousness is limited, our reason built upon things finite : it is irrational to suppose that a finite consciousness and reason can be a measure of the Infinite, this smallness cannot judge that Immensity; this poverty bound to a limited use of its scanty means cannot conceive the opulent management of those riches; an ignorant half-knowledge cannot follow the motions of an All-Knowledge.[22]

The Being, the Self-existent sees all existences in its one existence; it contains them all and knows them as being of its being, consciousness of its consciousness, power of its power, bliss of its bliss; it is at the same time, necessarily, the Self in them and knows all in them by its pervadingly indwelling selfness : but still all this awareness exists intrinsically, self-evidently, automatically, without the need of any act, regard or operation of knowledge; for knowledge here is not an act, but a state pure, perpetual and inherent.[23]

On the one side, then, presented to us as the Reality, we have an absolute Self-Existence, an eternal sole self-being, and through the experience of the silent and inactive Self or the detached immobile Purusha we can move towards this featureless and relationless Absolute, negate the actions of the creative

Power, whether that be an illusory Maya or a formative Prakriti, pass from all circling in cosmic error into the eternal Peace and Silence, get rid of our personal existence and find or lose ourselves in that sole true Existence. On the other side, we have a Becoming which is a true movement of Being, and both the Being and the Becoming are truths of one absolute Reality.[24]

(End of Section II)

Compiled by NATHANIEL PEARSON

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INTEGRAL EDUCATION FOR A NEW WORLD*

THERE is a necessary correlation between our personality and the world we live in and enjoy. The world in which I live is the one that my capabilities of perception, sympathy and action create or discover for me. This is true of an individual, a society and an age.

The present-day world is characterised as a world of conflict and tension. And do we not talk of the present-day personality too as a split personality ? If we now want to create a world of collaboration and unity, will it not be necessary to seek and achieve an integrated personality ?

But is an integrated personality just the sum of a proportional development of knowledge, emotions and action, or does it imply, above all, a dominant centre of integration in personality? This is a most vital issue today when we have learned to recognise integrated personality as the ideal of education as well as of culture. Sri Aurobindo says, "It is not yet realised...that the true secret whether with child, or man, is to help him to find his deeper self, the real psychic entity within. That, if we ever give it a chance to come forward, and still more if we call it into the foreground as 'the leader of the march set in our front,' will itself take up most of the business of education out of our hands and develop the capacity of the psychological being towards a realisation of its potentialities of which our present mechanical view of life and man and external routine methods of dealing with them prevent us from having any experience or forming any conception." (*The Human Cycle*, American Ed., p. 35)

In Sri Aurobindo's view, the true secret of integrated personality obviously lies in the discovery and activisation of the psychic centre of personality. This centre is in its essential nature harmonious and integral and most capable of bringing about harmony, unity, sweetness, goodwill and collaboration in the personality and in its relations with the world.

Integral Education is the educational thought which he evolved as a fundamental social approach to realise the new personality, the personality indispensably needed for the new world of harmony and unity. He says, "A greater whole-being, whole-knowledge, whole-power is needed to weld all into a greater unity of whole-life." (*The Life Divine*, American Ed., p. 934)

Evidently we need a new education which can confidently hope for the powers which make for synthesis, reconciliation, wholeness.

The proposed Seminar is an attempt at a consideration of this issue of education. It is a sincere quest for a bit of experience of the orientation of Integral Education to life. The different topics and aspects of the subject will have all to be considered as avenues to a new view and way of Life.

INDRA SEN

* Basic statement for "World Union" Seminar to be held from June 1 to 10, 1961, at Tapogiri (the Himalayan Centre of Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry), Ramgarh, Dist. Nainital, U. P.

RABINDRANATH ON HIMSELF

Some Fragments

(What brought Tagore instant recognition in the West was the mystic vein in his writings. On the occasion of his hundredth birthday now being celebrated all over the world, we offer to our readers a few specimens of his prose and poetry where the poet blends with the mystic and passes judgment on his own life and work. The selections cover a wide margin of dates: the (prose) piece entitled "I have loved this world" was written on the occasion of his seventieth birthday celebrations, "The Sun of the First Dawn" was composed shortly before his death. The translations can hardly convey the rich melody and suggestiveness of the original Bengali.)

I

A Song

A SECRET have I shared with my flute alone,
A secret my flute alone has known.
A secret hung on my heart, that could be uttered to none,
I have whispered it into my flute alone.

In the depth of the night my eyes knew no sleep,
I have sat up gazing with the winkless stars.
I have passed the night thus, with no one to share my vigil.
Only the flute have I kept awake with my unending song.

II

I HAVE LOVED THIS WORLD

I have loved this world, I have saluted all that is great; I have yearned for freedom, the freedom that comes of surrender to the Supreme, I have held the faith that the true truth of man is in that Cosmic Being who is ever seated in the hearts of men. I once crossed beyond the confines of literary work, my sole preoccupation since my childhood days, in order that I might gather the first-fruits of my labour, the offerings of my sacrifice and dedicate them to

that Cosmic Being. That has brought me opposition from without, but my heart has felt satisfied. I have come as a pilgrim to this Holy Land of earth. Here the godhead of man holds the centre of the stage, in all countries, in every nation, in the history of all time. I have taken a quiet seat at the foot of that altar, and am even now engaged in the arduous task of wiping off my pride and egoism, my sense of difference with the All.

III

The Everlasting Me

When these walks no longer will carry the imprints of my feet
And my ferry will ply no more on this bank,
The bargainings are done, settled the credits and dues,
And ended my journeyings to this noisy mart,—
What will it matter if you remember me not then,
Nor softly call my name as you gaze at the stars ?

When the strings of my lyre become mute with the dust
And the briars creep on to my doors,
And the flower-beds wear the wild garb of grass
And heavy moss gathers along the slopes of the pool,—
What will it matter if you remember me not then,
Nor softly call my name as you gaze at the stars ?

This hall of music will be ringing with the flute as now,
The days too will pass as they pass today;
The ferry will fill with the men at the crossing,
Kine will roam, cow-boys play in yonder field.
What will it matter if you remember me not then,
Nor softly call my name as you gaze at the stars ?

Who will say I am not there on that distant dawn ?
In all that joyous game, this self of mine will play.
You will call me by another name, entwine me with other arms,
But the same eternal Me will be moving in your midst.
What will it matter if you remember me not then,
Nor softly call my name as you gaze at the stars ?

IV

The Sun of the First Dawn

The early sun on the first dawn of day
Had asked a question, as my being first appeared :
"Who art thou ?"
There was no reply.

The years crowded upon years.
The parting sun at the end of day voiced a final questioning,
On a silent eve by the shores of the western sea,
"Who art thou ?"
There was no reply.

Translated by SANAT K. BANERJI

THE DANCER'S WORSHIP

RABINDRANATH TAGORE

HAVE mercy, O merciful one ! I bow to Thee, I bow !
I call upon Thee, O Peerless !
In the delight of dance
My soul rings out its heavings.

My body, in every limb, calls yearningly :
Lost is my lore in thy Voice
Pouring music all around into a new birth.
My adoration leaps out in music through every limb of mine,
Oh ! this supreme pain that aches my soul,
Vibrates my heart,—
The swell in the sea of Peace
Where Beauty awakes !

All my being, all my pain
Has built this adoration of mine;
May it not end in shame,
This life-offering at thy Feet.

I have not culled flowers from any woodland,
I have not gathered fruits,
Empty is my jar,
I have not filled it with holy water.
Into every limb of mine, my heart
Freed from all bonds
Pours out streams from the Beyond.

At Thy feet may it lose itself utterly,
In this sacred service of worship
My adoration leaps out in music
Throuth every limb of mine.

Translated by NOLINI KANTA GUPTA *from the Bengali*

RABINDRANATH AND MODERNISM

(1)

BENGALI literature has reached the stage of modernism and even ultra-modernism. This achievement is, we may say point-blank, the contribution of Rabindranath. Not that the movement was totally absent before the advent of Rabindranath. But it is from him that the current has received the high impetus and overflooded the mind and the vital being of the Bengali race. We can recall here the two great artists who commenced modernism—Madhusudan and Bankim. But in their outlook there was still a trace of the past, in their ideas and expressions there was an imprint of the past. The transition from Ishwar Gupta and Dinabandhu to Bankim and Madhusudan—not from the viewpoint of time but from that of quality—is indeed a revolution. Within a short span of years the Bengali way of thinking and the refinement of their taste have taken a right-about turn. It was Bankim and Madhusudan who have placed Bengali literature on the macadamized road of modernism. Still, while walking on that road, somehow we were not able to shake off completely the touch of clay under the feet and the smell of swampy lands around. It was Tagore's mastercraft that enabled Bengali literature to drive in coach-and-four through the high ways. Not only so, in addition he has enriched and developed it to such an extent that we feel, pursuing the image, as if we could safely drive there the motor car, the steam engine and the railway train—even attempt to fly in the aeroplane.

The term modern, no doubt, relates to the present time, but there is in it a factor of space as well. It is the close communion among the different countries of the world that has made modernism modern. The relation of give-and-take among many and various countries and races has given each country a particular atmosphere and character. The uniqueness that has thus developed is perhaps the fundamental feature of modernism. Bankim and Madhusudan were modern, for they had infused the European manner into the artistic consciousness of Bengal. Europe itself is indeed the hallowed place, the place for pilgrimage of our epoch. Humanity in the modern age plays its great role in Europe. So to come into contact with Europe is to become modern—to take one's seat at the forefront in the theatre of the world. Thus it is that Japan has become modern in Asia. And China lags behind for want of this contact.[1] In India it was the Bengalis who first of all surpassed all others in adopting European

[1] To-day she is making up for the lapse by an overdose of modern Russianism.

ways. That is why their success and credit have no parallel in India. From Bharatchandra, Ishwar Gupta even up to Dinabandhu the genius of Bengal was chiefly and fundamentally Bengal's own. The imagination, experience and consciousness of the Bengalis had been till then confined to the narrow peculiarities of the Bengali race. Bankim and Madhusudan broke the barrier of provincialism and cast aside all parochialism and narrowness of Bengalihood and brought in the imagination, consciousness, manners and customs of other lands.

Rabindranath too has done the same. But in a subtler, deeper and wider way. Firstly, at the dawn of modernism, the two currents, foreign and indigenous, though side by side did not get quite fused. They stood somewhat apart though contiguous. There was a gulf between—a difference, even a conflict —as of oil and water. In Madhusudan these two discordances were distinct and quite marked. It was in the works of Bankim that a true synthesis commenced. Still, on the whole, the artistic creation of that age was something like putting on a dhoti with its play of creases and folds, and over it a streamlined coat and waistcoat and necktie. Both the fashions are beautiful and graceful in their own way. But there is no harmony and synthesis in their combination. It was Tagore's genius that brought about a beautiful harmony between the two worlds. In the creation of the artistic taste of Bengal he has opened wide the doors of her consciousness so that the free air from abroad may have full play and all parochialism blown away. Yet she has not fallen a prey to foreign ways to become a mere imitation or a distant echo; it is the vast and the universal that has entered. True, Tagore's genius belonged intimately to Bengal, but not exclusively; for it has been claimed also by humanity at large as its own. The poet's consciousness has returned home after a world-tour, as it were. It has become the Bengali consciousness in a wider and deeper sense. So the poet sings :

> My own clime I find in every clime,
> And I shall win it from everywhere.

Thus, for example, the ideas and movements that have taken shape in Swinburne and Maeternlinck have induced some echoing waves in the works of Tagore here and there. Some of the things, specially characteristic of the West, were fused into his inspiration, became his own and formed part of the being of the pure Bengali race: these have grown now its permanent assets. Rabindranath's experience has, so to say, travelled across space to embrace the universe. On the other side, in the matter of time too his experience has far exceeded the present to climb to the lofty past. At times he soared high to the experiences of the seers of the Upanishads or the Vaishnava devotees, and came down with them into the widely extended domain of universal experience. The modernism

of his poetic creation developed on the wings of these two aspects, and its key-note is the harmony and synthesis of the East and the West, the present and the past. Thus the oriental and the occidental thoughts, ideas, experiences and realisations of the present and of by-gone times, that possess any value or special significance, have combined and are fused in the delightful comprehension of the poet giving birth to a new creation in which a great diversity vibrating in a common symphony blossomed with immaculate beauty.

How the two original streams of thought, oriental and occidental, were synthesised in Tagore's work is a subject that demands a deep study. I do not propose to deal with the subject in its entirety, but I shall try to point out a few salient features. The European consciousness, especially modern, is centred on this physical world, this living body endowed with the ardent senses, on the undeniable total reality of the outside world where, after all, things are transitory; and of the dualistic life it espouses, this consciousness lays more stress on death than on life, on misery than on happiness, on shadow than on light; it seeks beauty and fulfilment in contrast and conflict in human life and conscionsness. Inspired by this idea our poet sings :

Not for me liberation through renunciation.

or,

Is the Vaishnava's song only for Vaikuntha[1] ?

Again,

Where is the light, O where ?
Kindle it with the fire of separation.

I do not say the indulgence of the lower nature, the physical propensities and the sense-objects is less prevalent in our country. The teeming wealth of sensuality that is found in Kalidasa and Jayadeva has hardly any parallel in the literature of any other country. But the oriental approach is quite different from the occidental. The consciousness and the attitude with which Europe has accepted and embraced the sense-world or the material world are profane, pagan—the enjoyment of pleasure in the grossest and the most materialistic way, pleasure for the sake of pleasure. The fount of tears pent up in the core of every transient object ("sunt lacrymae rerum"), so said Virgil, the great poet of Europe. The artistic mind of Europe derives its inspiration from there. The Indian consciousness even after accepting the material objects could not completely exhaust itself in the earthly relation only. As the Upanishad says, the husband, the wife or the son is dear to us not because of their own sake but for the delight of one's soul. It is not that the spiritual basis of consciousness is directly or actively manifest in all Indians or even all creative artists of India. But

[1] The highest heaven

this perception permeates the atmosphere, the firmament, the air, land and water of India. And this idea, on the whole, brought about a special outlook and tone in the style of her creative arts. The works of Vaishnava poets are replete with earthly love, at places only nominally associated with God; and yet even this nominal or tacit association is a very characteristic and special feature. And it cannot be put in the category of mere earthly and human outlook as known to us. At least earthly things and sense-objects have not been presented solely with their own norms and values. They have been assessed in relation to the values of something else, their truth has been determined as a help or an impediment to some other truth. Not that artists of this type are totally absent in Europe. There also—although it is the exception rather than the rule as here—we come across a few who have the experience of the Imperishable in the perishable, and the realisation of Consciousness in Matter. The experience of silence, for example, was in some so overwhelming as to render names and forms secondary—insignificant—and to reduce them to mere shadows. Thus to Words worth all natural truths and beauty are inherent in the power that presides over Nature which he calls Spirit.

Tagore wanted to seize the object as a real object and touch the body physically, with the sense of touch. Unlike the spiritual seers he could not remain content with embracing the object in and through the soul alone and the person through the impersonal. As a mortal he sought to taste the delight of mortal things. And yet he established the Immortal in the mortal. He looked upon the body as body and yet was united with it in and through something of the formless soul. The uniqueness of his realisation consists in the synthesis of the duality, the contrary. Like the pagan he maintained intact the terrestrial enjoying, even made it more intense, yet he brought down into it something of the supra-physical. And for this harmonisation he resorted to the consciousness of the Upanishads which is innate to his country. The thing that has bridged the gulf between the physical and the supra-physical, between the body and the soul, between the inmost within and the outmost without is the heart of the devotee —the emotional fervour of the Vaishnavas, adorers, lovers and those who have the fine sense of beauty and. delight.

Rabindranath has the intuition of the Brahman, the infinite Bliss, the One without a second, which is beyond all limits and is the support of all, as the vital principle. He has, at every step, sung the victory and glory of this vital aspect of the Brahman. He has often cited this aphorism of the Upanishad :

> All created things are moved by the *pranic* power.

Inspired by this idea he too had sung :

> Deep I dive into the ocean of life and breathe it in to my heart's content.

The rhythm of life flowed out into movement and dynamis. Here again another feature of the modern mentality, characteristic, for example, of the vitalists, is found in him. But the difference is that he has not assigned the highest place to it, though he has magnified it considerably. He has endeavoured to posit something of immobility within or behind the moving and to make all stirrings terminate in a wide peace. Although he gave himself to the duality, the many, the swirling flood-tide of the external world, he was in close touch with the inner being, the profundity which is filled with the calm and silence of the One.

No doubt, he says :

> Away with your meditation,
> Away with your flower-offering,
> Let your clothes get torn and soiled.

But what he meant to say is this :

> Then you may rush out to the wide world
> And remain unsullied
> In the midst of the dust,
> And walk about freely
> With all chains on the body;
> Until that day dawns
> Remain in the depths of your heart.

The life that was the object of Rabindranath's worship was no other than the Brahman in Its aspect of Pranic Energy. On the one hand the sense of this Prana-Brahman impelled him towards the world as such and, on the other hand, a gesture and glimpse of the Transcendent Brahman served to give a poise and measure, cadence and contour to that Immeasurable Energy.

We lay so much stress on this aspect of Tagore, because herein lies the main secret of man's modernity and his immediate future. What is required of man is to attain to the supra-physical without losing the reality of the real, to convert the physical into the supra-physical; though the physical is not lost in oblivion, yet its own forms and ideas are brought under the pressure of the supra-physical and tinged with the colour of the same; so that it can be seen in a new light as an image of the supra-physical. But the modernity of to-day wants to keep the nature and the essence of the physical intact and, keeping its speciality unimpaired, endeavours to manifest the supra-physical in the physical. Man's universal urge to-day finds expression in the immortal line of Tagore :

O Infinite, Thou dwellest in the finite.

We believe that the entire future of humanity depends on the spiritual practice and its realisation in this life. And in this respect Rabindranath the poet has almost become to us the seer Rabindranath. Rabindranath is a pioneer and guide of modernism. The object or the goal of present-day life which itself is to constitute the spiritual practice has found its symbolic expression in Rabindranath.

NOLINI KANTA GUPTA

(*Translated by Chinmoy from the Bengali essay in "Rabindranath".*)

BOOKS IN THE BALANCE

Rabindra-Jivan-Katha (in Bengali). *By Prabhat Kumar Mukhopadhyaya.* Viswabharati (Granthan Bibhag), Calcutta 7. Pp. 297 + X, Price Rs. 6.00.

Amader Shantiniketan (in Bengali). *By Sudhiranjan Das.* Viswa-Bharati Granthalaya, Calcutta. Pp. 111, Price Rs. 5.00.

"By admiration we live." Indeed, now and then to remember and meditate upon the lives and thoughts of great souls who have gone before us in the great saga of human progress is one of the most potent means by which we may hope to pull ourselves out of the morass of our daily round of trivialities and create in us a real *essor* for making further progress.

India is at the moment celebrating the birth centenary of one of her noblest sons, her greatest poet since the Bard of Ujjaini poured forth his immortal melodies on the banks of the river Sipra. Yet be it noted that poetry has but been one, albeit the most prominent, amongst many other equally important vehicles through which the superbly rich personality of Rabindranath Tagore sought self-expression throughout his long and eventful life.

Of course Tagore was a very great poet and for that matter a great *littérateur*; for there is hardly any department of literature that has been left untouched by his creative genius, and everywhere his touch has proved to be golden. But this is no more than one aspect of his achievement. Indeed Tagore is a veritable phenomenon even in the world of the great. A versatile genius, *sarvatomukhī pratibhā*, and a multi-dimensional creative personality of his *genre* is rarely to be met with. As the *New York Times* in its issue of April 9, 1961 rightly observes: "As writer, philosopher, teacher and leader, Tagore became a world figure, a man of great moment for India."

In this centenary year of celebrations, people would very naturally seek to know more about the radiant personality that was Rabindranath. And in this task, at least to those conversant with the Bengali tongue Sri Prabhat Kumar Mukhopadhyaya's *Rabindra-Jivan-Katha*, written as it is by one who has lived in close proximity to Tagore during the last thirty years of the poet's life, comes as a very welcome help. For although the biography under review has not been written from an analytical angle—the author seems to aim here at offering no more than a simple unadorned account, almost a chronological narration, of the life and deeds of Rabindranath—yet such is the charming grace of his style, made up of felicitous expressions coupled with occasional touches of scintillating humour, that the reader's attention does not flag even for a single moment while going through this work which in less competent hands would have very easily degenerated into a mere catalogue of desiccated facts. Indeed the narration is so full of verve and glow that even from the very beginning the reader's curiosity is constantly kept to the fore and he follows at every step with an avid interest the progressive unfoldment of the drama of the Poet's life.

Sri Sudhiranjan's *Amader Shantiniketan* comes as a very pleasant surprise. Who could have imagined that such an eminent jurist, to wit, the ex-Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of India, wrote such beautifully cadenced flawless Bengali of such high literary merit ! The reviewer still remembers his sense of wonder when he first came across a short excerpt from this book, published in the noted literary journal *Desh*. Now, after going through the whole of the book, one almost feels like regretting that although the profession of Law has gained in the person of Sri Sudhiranjan one of its most ardent and brilliant notaries, yet in the process Bengali literature has lost a very gifted prospective writer.

As is now well known, Tagore was a great teacher and educationist who through his not-so-happy personal experience became convinced early in his life of the soul-cramping futility of the type of education that is normally prevalent in schools and colleges. A growth from within, a flowering in joy in a happy relation of harmony with the world of Nature around us : such was the ideal of education envisaged by the Poet and in order to give a concrete form to this ideal he established in 1901 at *Shantiniketan* a centre of learning that he most significantly christened *Brahmacharyashrama* and that was to develop in course of time into Viswa Bharati, one of the Central Universities of to-day.

Sri Sudhiranjan Das is himself an old *alumnus* of this institution and in the title under review he offers us a most living account, at times bordering on the poetic, of this unique centre of learning as it was, let us say, five decades ago in the early stages of its growth. Through a very characteristic style of his own, Sri Das recreates the atmosphere of his student days passed in the *Brahmacharyashrama* and that too with so much soul-stirring sincerity that even for those readers who have never seen the *Shantiniketan* of old it engenders a sense of nostalgia for the simple innocence of the days gone by. (In this connection one cannot but be prompted to ask in anguish : has Viswa Bharati in its present material opulence been able or even sought to maintain the ideal for the fulfilment of which the *Shantiniketan Brahmacharyashram* was founded by the Poet?)

Such is the soothing charm of Sri Das's style that when, after going through his book, the reader finally lays it by, he almost feels he has come out of a deep plunge, on some sultry summer day, in the refreshingly cool waters of a village pool. Sudhiranjan's book will be all the more prized because of a number of sketches by eminent artists like Nandalal Bose, Abanindranath Tagore, Ramendranath Chakravarty, Mukul Dey and others.

Finally we have no hesitation in saying that no lover of Tagore should miss these two titles : *Rabindra-Jivan-Katha* and *Amader Shantiniketan.*

JUGAL KISHORE MUKHERJI

Dhyana *by M. P. Pandit.* Publisher : M.P. Pandit, Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry. Pp. 60. Price : Rs. 2.00—Sh. 5.

The author has at his disposal abundant resources of literary, philosophical and spiritual refinement. Quality, and not quantity, is the choice of the wise. Likewise the substance of a book, and not the number of its pages, is of paramount importance. All the sixty small pages of this book breathe spiritual fervour and mystic insight.

In chapter I, M.P.Pandit throws considerable light on Dhyana. "Dhyana," he writes, "to be successful has to be supported by an active participation of the Dhyani." Further he places before the reader the Mother's momentous views in his own language: "...for meditation to be really effective, it should be dynamic. It must develop into a power of changing things from moment to moment, and that requires an active will, ceaseless attention and a supporting aspiration all the time."

Chapter II deals with the forms of Dhyana. To the truth-seekers this chapter will be of great help, for it not only describes lucidly the various forms of Dhyana, but also endeavours to point out to them how sadhana can be made easier and safer. Of the three centres (the head, or between the eye-brows, or the heart) the author writes : "As a rule, however, particularly in the early stages, Sri Aurobindo and the Mother advise concentrating or meditating in the heart, for the Divine is more easily accessible in this part than in any other."

In the third chapter the author has to all intents and purposes given the quintessence of Rajayoga with its eight limbs in a brief but lucid manner.

In the fourth and last chapter he writes about the place and purpose of 'Dhyana in the Integral Yoga.' "In the Integral Yoga of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother which seeks the development of man in all his fullness and the transformation of the entire human nature into a divine nature, Dhyana can play an important role. But it is neither the sole nor the whole means. The physical or the psychophysical methods of this discipline are taken up and replaced by a working of a higher order, the operations of a spiritual Force which effects all the results of the lower working but in a more radical manner."

The book is in line with the several which in the last few years the pen of M. P. Pandit has produced in English, a source of inspiration to the admirers and followers of the Aurobindonian literature, philosophy and Yoga.

CHINMOY

Students' Section

TALKS ON POETRY

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

TALK TWENTY-SEVEN

WE have already made the rather startling statement that Mallarmé is best summed up as the Symbolist Poet of Nonsense, Absence and Silence. But we have dealt in generalities : now we must come to the particular face and form, as it were, of this Holy Trinity of his art. We must not only feel the dedicated distance, the aesthetic inwardness in which he seemed to carry on his life as a poet in the midst of the physical and intellectual activity of Paris in the last quarter of the nineteenth century. We must also examine the complex composition of his mind before we study the mind of his complex compositions.

In his day Science had assumed undeniable authority. To ignore it seemed sheer escapism. The great Newton had stated in mathematical formulas the fixed laws of the heavenly bodies. According to Newton himself, the grand determinism of the starry processions proclaimed a divine law-giver. But the scientists who came after him had not the same gravity of mind as the discoverer of the Law of Gravitation. They were more interested in physical things as such, and the discovery made by him led them on to another philosophy than his.

They did not begin with a sense of God as he had done : they began with the physical phenomena themselves. They found them acting with a vast regularity which they could predict by means of their mathematics. Matter was there in front of them—it was an imposing fact. And Matter had a certain nature, and this nature had a certain mode of operation. So far as the tele-

scope gave evidence there was no break in the sequence of cause and effect which constituted the history of Matter. No divinity seemed to have a hand in the course of things. If there was a divinity, it had started the universe on its way and then left it to go on by itself. But these later scientific thinkers felt that such a divinity was rather superfluous. It was as good as non-existent so far as the actual working of Nature was concerned. Nobody could say anything about the beginning of the world. Why then burden oneself with the idea of a God who never intervened in the affairs of the universe ? You may be knowing what Napoleon was told by the famous French physicist Laplace. When Napoleon was explained the latter's theory of the way in which nebulas cooled down and contracted into solar systems according to strict mathematical laws, he asked : "Monsieur Laplace, where does God come in ?" The reply rang out : "Sire, I have no need of that hypothesis." *La place de Dieu*, for Laplace, was nowhere ! By Mallarmé's time the atheism of such men had become established in the educated French mind. It seemed intellectually dishonest not to accept a Godless universe.

What about man in this universe ? The scientists saw that man was made up of the same sort of Matter as the rest of the world. No doubt, this Matter in man appeared to be not only alive but also thinking—two functions which even the biggest nebula in the sky never exercised. But when the anatomical knife and the magnifying microscope probed into man's material constitution they could discover no special and separate life-force or mind-energy : Matter itself seemed to exhibit life and mind as two unusual properties. So the scientists thought it reasonable to suppose that here was only a complex organisation of the same stuff which was lifeless and mindless in the stone. Only the complex manner in which the atoms were organised led to the behaviour which we associate with vitality and mentality. The theory of Evolution pointed to man's relation with the animals and his development from the lower forms of life. All the higher functions of man could have evolved from those of the lesser types of living organisms. And there was little reason to believe that the simplest of these types did not evolve from certain states of non-living Matter. Thus nineteenth-century science came to the conclusion that man had no Soul, nothing that existed independently of the complex material organisation that is the living and thinking body.

Once more it was a Frenchman who presented this conclusion most cogently. What Laplace had done with the scientist's cosmos, Lamettrie by his book *L'homme machine* did with the scientist himself.

Against the atheism and materialism of Science many a poet and many a mystic protested. Blake, Wordsworth, Coleridge, Shelley—these were witnesses to a greater truth than Science. But in the eyes of commonsense what were the results of the activity of poetic mysticism ? Nothing comparable to the steam-engine, the telegraph, the mill-machinery or the system of mathe-

matical laws by which everything could be predicted with amazing accuracy. Coleridge puffed a good deal in talk after talk, but a steam-engine puffed better. Blake wrote several enigmatic books at a great speed, but the Morse code of dots and dashes was a better series of enigmatic signs and a telegram sent in it went much quicker than Blake's pen tracing out poems. Shelley spun out a number of fine visions, but the Cotton Mills spun more durable stuff and at a faster rate. Wordsworth spoke sublimely of a single Being present everywhere, but most people could not get into touch with this Being, while the mathematical laws which claimed to govern both the stars and the stones could be learned by anybody and found applying with a mechanical uniformity which was more impressive than the monotony of much of Wordsworth's poetry. Yes, there were protests against the spread of atheistic and materialistic Science, but they were rather unavailing in the opinion of intellectuals; and especially in France where the intellect was more at play than in the England of Blake, Wordsworth, Coleridge and Shelley nobody with brains thought of doubting the pronouncements of Physics and Physiology.

What those brains forgot was that man was the only creature who thought of asking whether he had a soul or not, whether there was a God or not. And they forgot that man, a minute speck on a tiny planet in the immense universe, could sit in judgment on the universe itself. And this he did by means of something which he called his mind and which, in spite of seeming to depend on the brain for proper functioning, was not felt in any way like a physical process. His most direct experience of his most intimate and momentous self-activity gave him a sense of the non-material. The scientific thinkers forgot too that to imagine this strange entity called mind as evolving from merely a play of physical atoms, however much we may endow them with attraction and repulsion, was to accept a more impossible miracle than to accept a non-material or spiritual origin for the physical universe—a Divine Being hidden within or behind phenomena and gradually manifesting itself as Matter, as Life, as Mind and pushing towards Supermind through even an Age of Atheism and Materialism.

Indeed, the scientists did not attend properly to the nature of the thought itself by which they became scientific thinkers. They looked outward and the scientific picture they had built up from observation seemed to them all-sufficing. Also, in those days, Science did not pass through such a crisis as it has done in our own century. The cosmos looked clear-cut, orderly, self-contained : the very nature of the physical world appeared to be revealed by Newton. Pope summed up Newton's achievement :

> Nature and Nature's laws lay hid in night.
> God said, "Let Newton be !" and there was light.

In our own day a poet has added :

But not for long. The Devil shouting, "Ho,
Let Einstein be !" restored the status quo.

Science in our day has become full of puzzling questions. Einstein's relativity theory and the quantum theory developed by Bohr and Heisenberg have made the physical universe so queer, so unpicturable in its ultimates that the mind gets almost a paroxysm in trying to conceive it.

In Mallarmé's time things were different. The pronouncements of Science were in an absolutely assured tone. And Mallarmé fell under their sway. But he did not set poetry at a discount. He felt that there was value in poetry and he felt that there was value in philosophy and he felt that religion had value. Still, according to him, philosophy could not stand in its metaphysical speculations against the concrete demonstrations of Science. Only one thing in Philosophy gripped him with an irresistible force. It was concerned with the problem of what are called Universals. It is a commonplace that there are Universals and there are Particulars. Various objects confront us—a number of Particulars. Many of them resemble one another. Take flowers. Flowers are of various kinds that we term roses, violets, lilies. Looking at each variety, we make a generalisation : the rose, the violet, the lily. Each generalisation represents a Universal : that which makes every particular rose a rose is a Universal. A consideration of all possible roses leads us to what we label as the Rose. But while we know one rose or another and a collection of roses, what is this common essence of them all that is the Rose ? Different roses have been in the past, are in the present, shall be in the future. There are roses in India and there are roses in England. Indian roses, like those elsewhere and at various times, have different shapes, different colours and different perfumes. Even the same rose is different in the morning, in the noon, in the evening. And yet all the different roses and the same rose in different conditions are called the Rose. Surely an odd thing, he Rose ! It must be at the same time red and yellow and white, a folded bud and a crowd of petals and a fading fragrance. It must be something that Helen of Troy received from Paris—Homer's Paris, of course, and not Mallarmé's —Paris the man to whom she was madly drawn and not Paris the city from which she might have run away frightened as if it had been her own husband Menelaus! And the Rose held in Helen's lily-slender fingers and watched by her violet-soft eyes must be the same as the Rose that suggested to the French poet Malherbe, when he wrote an elegy on the death of a friend's daughter, the two loveliest lines in French verse :

Rose, elle a vecu ce que vivent les roses,
L'espace d'un matin—

lines exquisitely Englished by John Chadwick (Arjava)—

A rose, hers was the roses' span of living,
Which one brief morn consumes.

And the Rose of Malherbe's inspiration must be the same as that which the Mother once gave me to paint when I rose from *pranam* at her feet to look at the smile whose radiant beauty surpassed all the flowers in the world. Again, the Rose I got must be the same as the one which on that very day the Mother put into the hands of a sadhaka named Radhanand whose habit was to go into a corner after the *pranam* and chew up the Mother's gift and make it a part of himself instead of letting it droop and crumble in the neck of a vase ! Well, the Rose that can be said to have existed in diverse ages and diverse states and diverse places (including Radhanand's stomach) is bound to be a most mysterious thing. Philosophers have exercised their wits in telling us what it could be.

Some of them say that it is just a general idea we form after scrutinising particular instances and that the Universal does not exist anywhere except in our minds. These philosophers are known as conceptualists. Others say that we do not have even a general idea: we have ideas only of particulars but we employ one and the same name for things which look similar : a Universal is simply a bit of noise we make. These philosophers are known as Nominalists. Still others, who are known as Realists, say that a Universal is a fact apart from and prior to the Particulars. And among these philosophers the most celebrated is Plato who, finding the Universal capable of being at all times and all places, regarded it as a reality unbound by space or time—a spaceless and timeless reality existing in some secret realm beyond the world of particular instances. To Plato, these instances are merely approximations to the Universal : the Universal is a perfection which is never fully realised in the things we know on the earth, a perfection in a transcendental Overworld. And there is a final unifying principle, a Universal of Universals, in which all the perfections coalesce Mallarmé found Platonism the most congenial view. But how was he to accept the Platonic Overworld when Science had told him that nothing was real except Matter ? That was a problem he had to solve.

When he turned to Religion he saw that the aspirations of the religious-minded, the sense the great mystics have of a supreme Godhead, a high Truth and Beauty and Goodness, a fundamental Sat-chit-ananda, a limitless and featureless Nirvana, were experiences which gave a wonderful richness to life. The very idea of a perfect Existence, Consciousness and Bliss, deep within or high above, flushes life with a golden glow. Science impoverishes life by banishing such experiences and ideas. Science keeps the mind of man from soaring. It loads it down to day-to-day needs, commonplace objects. It confines and constricts the emotions and covers everything with a grossness,

a drabness. This is intolerable. We must not ignore or brush aside the lofty feelings inspired by Religion. And when Mallarmé looked at both Philosophy and Religion he found that the Platonic Universal of Universals and the Divinity of Religion were essentially related if not identical and were just two ways of approaching the same Marvel. But both Platonism and the religious outlook made a certain demand on the intellect. Platonism required the conviction of a transcendental realm's existence. The religious outlook insisted on a real God and called for belief in Him. The intellect's assent to the actuality of these things was part and parcel of Philosophy and Religion. Yet Science set its face like flint against such assent. The ideal, the spiritual, could not be accepted as truths. Mallarmé could not pass beyond Science—and yet he could not give up what Science denied. He had to find a way to keep both.

His solution was Art. Art, in his view, consists only of a keenly enjoyed state of awareness. The poet conveys what he has visioned and felt, and we receive his vision, his feeling, and keenly enjoy it because it comes with a satisfying finality of flawless form. That is all. Art does not raise the question whether the poet's vision is of reality, whether his feeling is the response to a truth physical or supra-physical. Art is a self-contained self-sufficient delight of perfect self-expression. At its extreme it puts us in touch with an experience full of a beauty that seems to shine out from everything, a bliss that imparts the sense of some absolute. But no dogma, no doctrine is needed. We are concerned with enjoyment, our minds are involved in thrilling to the play of imagery, rhythm, significant design. According to Mallarmé, this play gives us in its own fashion all that the highest philosophy and the deepest religion can, and it does not demand intellectual assent and consequently it does not demand that we intellectually contradict the verdicts of Science. We can accept Atheism and Materialism and still avoid the dead hand of these "isms" upon our whole being : we can avoid it by plunging ourselves with care-free enthusiasm into Art—Art with its exultations and its ardours and its idealisms. To counteract the grossness, the drabness, the down-to-earthness of Science Art is a necessity. If we abandon what Art offers we make life not worth living in spite of the steam engine, the telegraph, the mill-machinery and the mathematical formulas of Physics.

Of course, a little more acuteness of mind would have led Mallarmé to argue : "If the entire value of life is centred in what Science cannot give, then surely Science has not said the last word on life and on the world in which life has come to hope and yearn, to aspire and be idealistic." And if Mallarmé had been a little more of a mystic he would have been enabled to hold against the so-called concreteness of the material results of Science the concreteness of spiritual realisation. To the genuine mystic, God is a reality to be seen and touched and embraced—to him there are worlds beyond the physical, which

he experiences with more solid sensation than anything he can lay his hands on—say, the clothes he wears. In fact, his sensation of those worlds and of his soul is like his sensation of his own body, while his sensation of the physical world is as of the clothes he wears. An outer reality covers an inner reality —both are concrete and just as clothes are meant for the body and not the body for the clothes and just as the body is more vividly an experience to us than our clothes, so the inner reality is more significant and important, more directly known and more intimately felt.

Mallarmé was neither a very acute thinker nor a very intense mystic. But he was a very acute and intense knower and feeler of Art. The poet in him was the chief person : he ate and drank and moved and worked and slept as if by sheer concession to his neighbours : he wrote poetry and talked about poetry and meditated on poetry with the whole passion of his being. And it was this identification of himself with poetry that led him to reject Science as the sole sufficing acitivity and even led him to criticise it for its mechanisation, its lifelessness, its earthiness. But since Science had for him the monopoly of truth he had to regard the experiences of Art in a peculiar way. He could never entertain the possibility of their pointing to anything real. He could never ask himself: "Although Art in itself makes no demand for intellectual assent, may not its intensities and wonders be yet signs of the true, the real ?" Art he summed up in the words *Rêve* and *Mystère* : the artist's activity is a surrender to Dream, an absorption in Mystery. And since we cannot put any substance into Art's Dream, give any reality to Art's Mystery, we must regard them not as an actual Presence but as an unreal Absence, not as Existence but as Non-existence, a Nothingness, a *Néant*. But to say "Absence" and "Nothingness" is not to employ negative terms. Art has the capacity to fill our being with its richness. The Absence haunts and enchants, the Nothingness appeases and liberates. They are positives, not negatives. They are an unreality yet a divine one. And this divine unreality is more precious than anything we accept as actual. Mallarmé speaks of poetry being concerned with fictions, phantoms, falsehoods, but he uses these words not in their ordinary meanings : these fictions are more worthy of pursuit than facts, these phantoms satisfy as no physical sensation can, these falsehoods are more life-giving than scientifically observed verities and the objects around us in our daily animal existence. Art is *Mensonge*, a Lie, but this *Mensonge* has a *gloire* missing in all the truths on the lips of Newton's successors. It deserves the whole-hearted and single-minded devotion of a man. In fact, in Mallarmé's view, we do not do justice to its value unless we dedicate ourselves to it.

So he became the high-priest of Poetry, the mystic of Aestheticism. And his Aestheticism, with its *Rêve* that is *Absence* and its *Mystère* that is *Néant* or *Rien*, may be described as poetic expression conjuring up a sense of two things. First, forms and figures, images and pictures emerge as it were from

some secret ether of unearthly lights and shadows behind the world we know. Secondly, these forms and figures play beautifully and blissfully about against a background that is a void, an indeterminate infinity in which everything gets lost, an infinity of the inconceivable and inexpressible, an infinity of Silence. Those unearthly images and pictures are crystallisations of the formlessness of the supreme Silence. They are marvels absent from all terrestrial realities —for example, the ideal Rose that is never to be found in any conglomeration of petals we can see or smell or pluck—or devotedly devour ! And these absent marvels are suggestive of the vacuous ineffable into which they are always on the verge of vanishing. This does not mean that Mallarmé is vague in his visions. The idealities of Absence are well-defined in their strangeness, but the strangeness comes charged with a power that draws our mind into depths and depths of something for which no words can be found and to which no image can prove adequate. Mallarmé thus is not a poet of the shimmering Shelleyan wash : he is very precise, but bewildering in what he makes precise and through that bewilderment he wants to give us, as Shakespeare would have said, "thoughts beyond the reaches of our souls"—or, as Mallarmé himself would have put it in less intelligible language, he wants to knock queer image against queer image until from their shock a flash is born, revealing a Shape which no one in the world is and, through this Shape, the unworldly No-one that alone can take such a shape.

I suppose you are quite puzzled. That is just what Mallarmé would have appreciated. If you could properly make out what he says he would consider himself to have failed. When a young person once told him that she had understood one of his poem after brooding over it a while, he exclaimed : "What a genius you are ! You have so soon understood what I the author am still trying to understand after twenty years !" But if you said that he wrote Nonsense he would be happy, for Nonsense is the opposite of all that the reasoning intelligence can make head or tail of, the reasoning intelligence which is the chief power of Science as well as in one way or another the chief power of what we call Commonsense. Yes, Mallarmé would have liked being called a poet of Nonsense—but he would not be Mallarmé if he let you rest satisfied that you had got hold of him by the right end in saying so. Nonsense in Mallarméan poetry is not the meaningless : it is the Meaning which the reasoning intelligence cannot grasp. According to him, this intelligence grasps what really has no value—the world of physical events and all that in the mind is close to physical facts and correlates them in mathematical theory. Only that which is beyond the range of this intelligence is the truly significant, for it is the glow of the Dream that provides the *raison d'être* to our eyes and it is the Mystery that supplies to our mouths the justification of speech.

We may now provisionally sum up. Mallarmé's aim in poetry is to write such Nonsense as brings up to our vision exact yet enigmatic images that tran-

scend our experience of the physical world and to combine these images in a manner baffling to the reasoning intelligence and by this combination instil in us the vivid feeling of a wondrous Void where world and thought seem beatifically extinguished and even the most strange imagery dissolves and the most Mallarméan language dies away into the unutterable.

AMAL KIRAN (K. D. SETHNA)

FAMOUS POETRY CONDENSED

WORDSWORTH'S IMMORTALITY ODE

Babes see
God's plan.
Not so
Grown man.
Ripe sage
Half can.

MARGARET WOOD

KEATS'S ODE ON A GRECIAN URN

Lovers
on jug
never
can hug.
—Men rot;
pots not.

MICHAEL WOOD

TENNYSON'S ULYSSES

Come back ?
Might try.
Wife's old;
Son's 'pi';
Push off—
Goodbye !

A. M. ROBERTSON

SHAKESPEARE'S HAMLET-SOLILOQUY

Stick life
Or not ?
Life's strife,
Death's — what ?
Hell's trick ?
I'll stick.

A. M. SAYERS

POPE'S ESSAY ON MAN

First Cause
Made laws.
But why ?
Don't pry,
Poor wight—
All's right.

A. M. ROBERTSON

AUDEN'S SPAIN

Past's done
—And how !
Leave plough,
Take gun.
Soon fun :
Fight now.

MARTIN ROBERTSON

ELIOT'S FOUR QUARTETS

(East Coker)

Start——end
(Death's smart).
Hop, blend,
Birth, art
(Stuff penned),
End, Start——

J. A. LINDON

(The Dry Salvages)

God-ri-
Ver-sea-
Mado-
-nna-Kri-
Shna-pot-
Pourri.

MARTIN ROBERTSON

(From "New Statesman", 30 July, 1960)

ON EGYPTIAN ART*

ANCIENT Egypt was able to keep its old tradition and distinct characteristics in the development of its art right from the earliest times. Before the dawn of history, that is, in pre-dynastic times, Egypt borrowed certain elements of her art from contemporary Mesopotamia. Two of these borrowed devices were the use of heraldic motifs and the portrayal of rampant animals facing each other. In the very latest period, Egyptian art was influenced by foreigners. We note a general softening of contour in figure compositions in the Ptolemic era. Anthropomorphism triumphed in the representation of the deities and there was an element of Hellenistic pictorialism. Egyptian art also came to depend upon forms used in the past.

The Egyptians combined their arts in a most unusual manner. Sculpture in the round was indistinguishable from architecture, as in the Great Sphinx at Gizeh and in the figures used in the columns of the Pharaoh Rameses and the god Osiris at Abu Simbel. Relief sculpture was done on architectural surfaces. Painting was at first a part of sculpture, for the Egyptians painted their reliefs. The murals looked more like sculptures. The negation of space is noticeable in Egyptian architecture as in plastic and pictorial arts.

The grandeur of Egyptian art is found in no other ancient civilisation. In each sample, including even the miniature-sized pieces, we note a monumental dignity. This shows their largeness of concept. This characteristic reflects the impressive political prestige, the financial power and material wealth of ancient Egypt. It also suggests that the final forms were preceded by long stylistic development through experimentation and manipulation of materials.

We find a remarkable variation of theme in the iconography of Egyptian art. Due to the importance of the death cult and the sacred character of the Pharaoh, religious themes were important, but secular motifs too were abundant. Tomb decorations gave representations of the daily activities of living men. Portraiture was unusually particularised in spite of the abstract quality of Egyptian art. During the reign of Ikhnaton in the XVIIIth dynasty realism flourished in art, as is suggested by the portraiture of the ruler and his wife fondling and playing with their small daughters.

* An essay written as Library assignment by a student of the Second Year course in World History and Civilisation at the Sri Aurobindo International Centre of Education. It has been slightly touched up.

Architectural examples were a refinement of the more primitive forms. The domestic plan was dominant over the others, the house for the dead became a more complex tomb, the house of the god a temple.

The pyramid, Egypt's most characteristic construction, passed through a long series of developments. The vast resources in stone, the unlimited labour supply and the consolidation of the country along the banks of the Nile under a strong monarchical system made this remarkable creation possible. The true pyramid developed from the truncated pyramidal tomb form or mastaba. Mastaba means "little bench" in Arabic. In the pre-dynastic period a mastaba was the super-structure over the grave. It was made of sun-dried bricks and had sloping walls. It gradually developed into the stone mastaba and served as a tomb for the noblemen of the dynastic period. Eventually it became the false pyramid at Medum, the step pyramid at Saqqara and the true pyramid at Gizeh.

The step pyramid at Saqqara is the first extant example of stone building in Egypt. It was a series of truncated pyramidal mastaba forms of diminishing size, superimposed one upon the other. The true pyramids at Gizeh were symbols of Amon-Ra, the sun-god. The limestone exterior was originally faced with red granite slabs polished to a glassy surface and it reflected the bright rays of the sun as well as the power, prestige and wealth of the Pharaoh. The great pyramids at Gizeh, namely, those of Khufu (Cheops), Khafra (Chephren) and Menkaura (Mycerenus), were only a refined development of the ancient mastaba, keeping at the basis its shape and function. The Sphinx at Gizeh, near the great pyramids, is architectural in scale despite its sculptural form. This portrait of the ruler with the body of a lion has no architectural use. Its colossal size makes it unique, although this composite figure was common as a guardian motif in Egyptian art.

The great pyramids were remarkable for the refinement in the art of stone-cutting with no power-tools, and for the utilisation of manual labour. In spite of their architectural function, materials and size, the pyramids are primarily sculptural masses, existing in space rather than enclosing space. The pyramids are not, truly speaking, works of architecture, for all their colossal scale, extraordinary mathematical accuracy of proportion and powerful symbolism.

In the New Kingdom, the priest became the sovereign class. The temples thus became the principal buildings of the period. The temple interiors rejected space as an important factor, for the religion did not require space for congregational participation. Courtyards were to be the sole attempt at a concept of enclosed space. The construction of the temple is akin to the pattern of the courtyard and house plan, but it is enlarged and new-oriented by religious considerations, as in the Temple of Amon-Ra at Karnak.

The two striking features of Egyptian art, the preservation of the past and

the largeness of scale, were clearly illustrated in sculpture. In the pre-dynastic period, the Egyptians gave importance to the perfection of technique, both in the handling of hard stone and in the fixing of conventional modes of presentation. Thanks to the vast resources in stone, experimentation was easy, and technical skill in handling materials developed early. The primitive theriomorphism of the Egyptian religion persisted.

The actual scale of the figures in relief art was determined by their relative importance in the social hierarchy, kings and gods being large with other figures diminishing in size according to their relative importance. Later Egyptian sculpture practised a special relief technique. The method was a combination of incised and relief work. Sculpture of this type became most common in the later dynasties owing to its time-saving features. The poses of sculptural figures never depart from the strictly frontal. But we find a tension in the figures; it is severe and exhausting as the figures stand with fists clenched at the sides, eyes staring ahead and one foot slightly advanced before the other despite the equal distribution of weight on both legs. The Egyptians painted their sculptural works and decorated them with elaborate jewellery.

Painting was not an important factor in Egyptian art, but as it was related to architectural surfaces and relief sculpture, it seemed important. The conventions of Egyptian painting were those of the sculptural art rather than the pictorial. Some Egyptian paintings have a fluid grace and freedom of action not always associated with the restraint of Egyptian art. In colour, in spatial problems, in the treatment of landscape and in the use of symbols, primitive Egyptian conventions prevail. Egyptian painting, in spite of its comparative liveliness, had little subtlety and maintained the role of an adjunct to the primitive sculptural forms.

VEENA

STUDIES IN SHAKESPEARE'S PLAYS

Study No. 7 : *Twelfth Night*—THE WINDS OF ILLYRIA

(Continued)

CHARACTERS *(Contd.)*

SIR TOBY, SIR ANDREW, FESTE, MARIA, MALVOLIO

SIR TOBY : SIR ANDREW

SIR Toby, Sir Andrew, Maria and Malvolio are the main characters of the underplot. Feste stands apart as the Court-jester.

Sir Toby, tipsy all day and a merry-maker all night, is a boisterious blunderer. His action, when he is not drunk, is chiefly noise directed against the weak and the helpless. He has no influence over Maria, Malvolio, or Olivia. With Fabian his eyes are set upon the youthful Viola or the unstable Sir Andrew. Sir Andrew has no personality, position, judgement, wit or valour. He is a dormouse into whom spirit has to be infused to woo Olivia or to challenge Viola. He lacks confidence as Malvolio lacks diffidence. He is the drab dribble of aristocratic society committed to the manoevring hands of Sir Toby. He runs away from Olivia and Viola but runs into Sebastian. Sir Toby quarrels with Viola on behalf of Sir Andrew but fights with Sebastian. Both characters create Comedy by their confusions. Both are cowardly and both are set right by Sebastian.

FESTE

Feste is the clown of Orsino. More sensible than Touchstone, less serious than the Fool of Lear, free of the gloom of Jaques, more cultured than the grave-digger of Hamlet, less dangerous than the clown of Cleopatra, he is, in the beauteous setting of the Court of Illyria, a musician of the palace. He is essentially a minstrel. On his lips are the follies of song; in his eyes the sparkle of wit; in his wisdom the sharp trebles of Comedy. The Jester has become the artist.

MARIA

Maria is the crown of the comic characters of *Twelfth Night*. Beyond the deferential presence of her mistress, she is a boisterious bouncing chatterbox. Her peculiar target is Malvolio. She detests his pompous stewardship, supercilious smiles, puritanic culture, easy-winning manners, gay garters and high-soaring hopes in Olivia's favour. She has inventive humour and

devilish wit. Awake to his foibles, Maria, a skilled forgerer, a soft inciter and a shrewd wit, kindles the fantastic fires of his Quixotic imagination. A careless letter, supposedly written by Olivia of her love, left on the pathway, sets in motion his fancies dreams and aspirations. She rightly predicts his reactions; she acutely excites the curiosity of Olivia; she tactfully obtains her orders for his detention. Maria's pranks are without malice; but the results are quasitragic. Her recreation exceeds the mark of Comedy; the injured Malvolio cannot forgive her.

MALVOLIO

Malvolio is the well-groomed butler of the household of Olivia. He carries himself above his position. He is the indispensable hand of his cloistered mistress. He opens the doors to her visitors or closes them to her wishes. Self-importance is stamped on his character. Viola slaps his dignity; Maria breaks his pride. Viola gains admittance into the halls of Olivia despite his protestations and pretences. He is punctilious in the performance of his duties. He delivers Olivia's ring to Viola with propriety. He reports to her with nicety and elegance. A smile is the constant feature of his services. His dress is carefully suited to his station; adoration of Olivia flows from the manners of his rank. Aspiration for her hand—subtly stimulated by the servants of the house—weighs on his mind. He is the ready and inflammable material for the humour of Maria. Malvolio is a fantastic idealist capable of any make-believe; he is the Don Quixote of *Twelfth Night*. His fancies rush in unhindered velocity into the preposterous vistas of an unbridled imagination. Discrimination, scrutiny, judgement and balance are wanting in his character. Impulses guide; prudence is smothered. Maria's forged letter is the spark to a strange conflagration. It is the explosion of the bubble of his pride long lying in languor in his secret depths. Hereafter, in yellow stockings and gay garters, hated of Olivia, he rollicks in garden or pathway in the revelry of impossible dreams. Smiling, whining, caressing his hands, eyeing his clothes, muttering in under-breath magniloquent phrases of thrusting destinies into upsoaring heights of power he is the laughing-stock of Maria and the serious concern of Olivia. The dreams of Malvolio break in the dungeon and are discovered, under his protest to his mistress, as the plot of Maria. *Twelfth Night* removes the one inharmonious note of Comedy—the injuries of the much-abused Malvolio—by the softened plea of the gracious Duke for peace, forgiveness and reconciliation.

(Concluded)

SYED MEHDI IMAM

YOGA PHILOSOPHY OF PATANJALI*

(Continued)

Five Sources of Afflictions or Hindrances

So Patanjali propounds the five categories of mental modifications or psycho-mental currents in which the average, natural unillumined man remains engrossed. He leads a life of ignorance and suffering without ever attempting to know the cause of suffering or applying the methods of extricating himself from the net of Prakriti. When the *citta* is modified into any of the five kinds of cognitive conditions, the Self gets involved in it and is apt to identify itself with the particular state. When thus enfolded in the waves of modifications it forgets its original nature and considers itself to be subject to birth and death, growth and decay, suffering and enjoyment and all other kinds of dualities. It is led to believe that it sleeps, it wakes up, it is hungry, it is angry, it loves, it hates, it feels, it thinks, etc., though all the while these are outside its self-being and caused by the activities of the *citta*, the psycho-mental substance which is the centre of the external and ignorant Nature. It is *citta* that performs these functions of sleeping, waking, knowing, doubting, imagining and remembering. The Self only allows itself to be caught in the net of these modifications and as a consequence undergoes different kinds of afflictions or *kleśas* which constitute the main obstacles in the struggle for freedom of the soul. These obstacles or afflictions are classified by Patanjali into five forms which are as follows (*Vide* Yoga sutra, section II-3):

1. *Avidyā*: Ignorance. It is a positive falsifying power inseparably woven in the very texture of existence. This original ignorance by which truth is veiled and distorted can be compared with the idea of 'original sin' in Christian Theology. It is defined by Patanjali as the experience of 'the permanent, of the pure, of pleasure and of self in what is impermanent, impure, pain and not-self.' It is due to the deceptive play of Avidya that the Self, the Eternal, the Perfect, the All-pure cannot be easily experienced or realised by the natural man. Further, Avidya is the mother of the other four distractions—it is the soil in which they have their roots firmly fixed. Avidya and these four distractions may appear in four different conditions. They are dormant, lying repressed

* From lecture-notes given to the Philosophy students at the Sri Aurobindo International Centre of Education.

as seeds under the soil in the type of Yogins who have made some progress but have not been able to burn up and completely destroy the seeds. These Yogins cannot be regarded as *mukta* for under favourable circumstances the repressed seeds may present themselves in full power and upset them. Then there may be an attenuated condition of the obstacles as in the case of the beginners of Yoga. But in those who live an ordinary life these five distractions are all-engrossing and cause complete oblivion of the true being. When a Yogin is able to eliminate them, burning up even the hidden seeds in the inconscient parts of the being, he becomes completely free and lives in the eternal bliss of the luminous self.

2. *Asmitā*: ego-sense; feeling of personality, self-esteem etc. It is the false identification of the self with Buddhi or thinking principle. All persons except the Yogins are liable to mistake the thinking mind as the self. They are not able to see that the Self and the thinking principle are two distinct things. The power of seeing consciousness and the power that is conscious of seeing are mixed up in an undifferentiated state of awareness leading to the grand illusion of mind posing as the master, the Self. *Asmitā* is to be distinguished from *ahaṅkāra* of the *Sāṁkhya* metaphysics. Ahankāra is the Cosmic principle of individuation or diversification. It is this principle which produces the "Many" and the corresponding sense of division. Asmitā is the mental homologue of the universal principle. The universal principle working in the mental make-up of the individual becomes psychologised in the form of Asmitā. Asmitā is the effect of inseparable union (*saṁyoga*), from a timeless beginning, between the Purusha and the principle of Mahat or Buddhi, the first evolute of Pradhana, the sattva aspect of Prakriti which is adjacent to the supreme conscious Principle in man.

3. *Rāga*: attraction or attachment. It includes all desires for pleasurable experiences and for the ways and means of gaining the objects of such desires. It includes all kinds of cravings for food, for sensuous enjoyments, likes and preferences, attachment to activity or its opposite rest, love of comfort which implies the desire to avoid discomfort, the craving for excitement or amusement, the love of associations, friends and relations, pleasures of possession, the urge of sex and vital enjoyments, of all kinds of contacts that produce passion, attachment and infatuation.

4. *Dveṣa*: aversion, dislike, or repulsion to disagreeable experience. It is usually regarded as the opposite of the previous affliction, namely, attachment or rāga. Psychologically it is the dwelling on pain just as rāga is the dwelling on objects of pleasure. A deeper probing shows that rāga and dveṣa are but two aspects of the same psychological condition and one inevitably leads to the other; also one can be changed into the other. Both attraction and repulsion are forms of attachment. They are the two poles of the same thing; one is the positive and the other the negative form of attachment.

5. *Avinivesa* : clinging to life, the will to live and its opposite, namely, the instinctive fear of death. It can be regarded as a universal instinct in all forms of living things. From the unconscious worm to the illumined sage, all are endowed with this "instinct of self-preservation". "May I not cease to live !" "May I continue to live !"—this is the form of this craving that pervades the entire world of living creatures. In plant-life also we can observe the same hidden tendency towards biological immortality. In human beings it has received a definite and conscious form. Human beings are consciously in love with life and terribly afraid of death. This fear of death indicates that there must have been previous experiences of the painful character of death in our past lives. It is thus taken as an indirect proof of previous births and deaths of the individual. Now Patanjali wants to root out this very passion for continued life in order to help one to stand aloof from all movements of Prakriti so that one may discover the immobile, unattached Purusha in him, and be eternally united with it, freed once for all from all sufferings of embodied existence. The struggle to overcome this attachment is not an easy thing and we may doubt if it has ever been conquered. It is innate, inborn, deep-rooted in the very cells of the body. It is not produced by education or environment or any extraneous force outside of it but may be taken as inhering in the very principle of life. According to Vedanta life in its essence is immortal and therefore it cannot be so easily dispensed with as Patanjali imagines. The right view would be to see it as an expression of the will of the Divine for manifesting in the material plane the infinite truth-ideas of the Supramental Divine—the Truth-Consciousness.

Sri Aurobindo says in *The Life Divine* "It could be affirmed...that there is one all-pervading Life or dynamic energy—the material aspect being only its outermost movement—that creates all these forms of the physical universe, Life unperishable and eternal, which, even if the whole figure of the universe were quite abolished, would itself still go on existing and be capable of producing a new universe in its place..." This Universal Life Principle, all-pervading, is present in human beings, in animals, in plant life, in minerals and even in atoms. This Life is usually associated with the breathing function as in men and animals but that is a limited view and it can be clearly demonstrated in Yogic practices that life can continue without breathing or the necessity of taking food in order to maintain the body. In fact Hathayoga, with Prānāyāma and Asana, which constitutes an important limb of Patanjali's Raja Yoga, aims at experiencing and proving the independence of the life-principle from the physiological function of breathing, circulation, digestion, etc. ; but the full implication of life is, however, missed as his central advice is withdrawal from life.

Of course the usual form of love for life and its activities is a narrow and perverted form of clinging accompanied by suffering, and deserves to be

rejected. All Indian Yogas are unanimous about the vicious effect of abhinivesha on spiritual life and special yogic measures are prescribed by the teachers to deal with this on the mento-physiological level and they have also urged a certain amount of restrictions of the field of life-activities. In the Integral View of Life as propounded by Sri Aurobindo there is hardly any restriction to be imposed on life activities by the individual. There is rather a universal affirmation of the diverse movements of life-energy. Only, one has to realise that all life is Yoga and the paramount need for the individual is to translate all activities into Yoga by uniting them with the will of the Divine. Patanjali's Yoga insists upon reversing the journey of life in an opposite direction and merging oneself in the infinite Consciousness of a static Self. This return journey may be possible with a few rare souls who may be used by the Supreme Prakriti to demonstrate such a possibility of isolation of spirit from life but it cannot be taken as the goal of world existence. The Integral Yoga of Sri Aurobindo reveals the intention of the Supreme Mother of creation and shows the way of fulfilling the great aim of life and existence by a process of complete transformation with the Divine's help and guidance in the beginning and then by a total surrender to the will of the Divine. When this consummation is aimed at, then gradually the hidden sense of eternity and immobility in the movements of life, the true values of love for life and of all clinging attachment to it and its opposite, the aversion for death, would stand revealed and the promise of Life Divine on earth in an embodied being would come nearer to realisation.

The traditional Yogas, however, could not see this possibility of divine life on earth. To the spiritual seekers of the post-Upanishadic periods life became an equivalent of suffering, and complete detachment from life and its activities would then logically be the right diagnosis of all our ills. So the great cry of the ancients for *parāvairāgya* then becomes justifiable as the sole means of escape from the miseries of life. But the most ancient Upanishadic seers knew the value of life and also that of *vairāgya* or renunciation. Enjoyment of life and renunciation appear to be irreconcilable only on a lower level of consciousness but on a higher level the true fulfilment of life in absolute delight of existence is marked by utter freedom from desire and egoism which is indeed the true significance of renunciation. The very first sloka of Isha Upanishad lays down this principle of divine life ; namely, enjoyment through renunciation. In a higher range of Consciousness this pair of opposites—enjoyment and renunciation—is changed into a pair of complementaries—enjoyment implying renunciation and *vice versa*. The fulfilment of one depends on the acceptance of the other. This golden rule was missed by the later thinkers who gave undue emphasis to one at the cost of the other, causing a good deal of imbalance in the later spiritual pursuits.

Yet Patanjali's analysis of the psychological obstacles on the path of spiri-

tuality has an abiding value even for the modern mind. The five obstacles mentioned above are all experimental truths and hold good even today. Man's longing for what is pleasant, his aversion for what is painful, his sense of personality constituted of egoism and desire, his native impulse to continue to live the ordinary course of life are certainly great impediments on the path of spiritual illumination. They can, however, be changed into their spiritual values but Patanjali must have them altogether excised out of the being. For him the attainment of liberation requires one to free oneself from the wheel of actions and consequent rebirths. All actions are directed by *citta*; hence the complete cessation of *citta vṛtti* is the *sine qua non* of attainment of freedom from the bondage of action. The Yoga of Patanjali thus presents a view of liberation, which is tantamount to complete withdrawal from life activities at least in the final stage of emancipation.

Five Levels or Modalities of Mental Life

According to Patanjali, Yoga means finally the complete cessation of mental activities. It is therefore necessary to know the different levels of conscious experience. If the object of Yoga is to prevent the soul from falsely identifying itself with any kind of modifications of the mind, it becomes necessary to cognise where these modifications are occurring. Thus Vyāsa in his great commentary called the Yoga-Bhāsya offers an exposition of the five levels of conscious activities. These levels or modalities are characterised by different degrees of the three qualities of sattva, rajas and tamas. Of these five levels the first two are prominent in ordinary men and are detrimental to the practice of Yoga. The third one is occasionally open to Yoga but is likely to be carried away by distraction. A discerning self-awareness is urgently needed for distinguishing the modes of consciousness so as to enable one to control the obstructing forces of the mind and prepare the ground for entry into the right form of concentration leading finally to samādhi.

The five modalities of mental life according to Vyāsa are as follows :

(1) *Kṣipta* or the condition of mind in which one is helplessly driven from one state to another. It is characterised by restlessness and unsteady action of the mind. This is a state in which the mind travels from one place to another like a restless itinerant. This is really the condition of the average natural man living a life of sensations and desires guided mostly by the instincts of the lower nature. In this level man is under the sway of rajas and tamas, the former preponderating, without having developed a proper mechanism of exercising control over the suggestions and attractions of the senses and the vital nature. And it is apparent that this condition is not at all conducive to Yoga.

(2) The second modality of mind or consciousness is called *muḍha* or a torpid condition dominated by an excess of tamas which is responsible for

producing dark and perverted tendencies of all kinds such as gluttony, envy, hatred, depression, idleness, and the like. In this state dark fumes from the inconscience rise up and occupy the *citta-bhūmi* covering it up with clouds of confusion and distractions, the offspring of tamas.

(3) The third level is called *vikṣipta* or a state of fragmented concentration, in which one is forced mechanically to pass from one activity to another, without maintaining proper balance. Here the element of rajas is preponderant. In this stage there is some degree of concentration on a particular theme but there is the absence of a steady will to fix one's consciousness firmly on anything for long—a sort of vacillating concentration. There is a kind of free will in action here but it is not sufficiently intense to be able to hold against counteracting influences. This degree of concentration is generally found successful in the ways of practical life. The power of mental concentration is here placed in service to secondary aims of life. In ordinary life—that is, in life not yet turned towards Yoga—the power of concentration is likely to be turned into a handmaid of vital desires for power and position, for money and comforts of life, for possession and enjoyment, for domination and exaltation and similar things. And we can see on this level examples of peculiar combinations of conflicting qualities and tendencies: for example, a great thinker otherwise, but dominated by a dark passion for vain pomp and power; or a great poet running after petty sensuous pleasures; or a scientist of world fame but perhaps fighting with his own brother for family property. This form of modality of consciousness is occasionally visited by rays of sattva which, however, finds no firm footing in the being as its vital parts are still unregenerated, turned away from the light that shines above. Though it is not the type of concentration directly helpful for Yoga yet it is possible to turn it to better account. Gradually it can be changed into a more concentrated form seeking higher values and progressing towards the eternal and imperishable values.

(4) The fourth level of *citta* is called *ekāgra* or one-pointed, a highly concentrated form. Here the *citta* is cleansed of all rajasic and tamasic taints. The outgoing impulse of the mind is made to turn inward and held in proper check, and the sattvic qualities of prolonged concentration full of pure light of consciousness illumines the *citta-bhūmi*. It marks the beginning of Yoga and prepares the way for complete cessation of all the modifications of *citta*. Note also that all concentrations are mental in nature. Even in the highly intense *ekāgra* concentration the mental function still persists. It is not completely arrested or ejected. Mental functions are still continued though in an orderly manner and on a calm and undisturbed basis. It is conducive indeed to the life of Yoga but is not itself Yoga in the full sense of the term in which it is used by Patanjali. Real Yoga is a going beyond the mental Prakriti and a discovering of the Purusha that shines above the mind.

(5) The next level, the deepest and the most conducive to an abiding life of Yoga is the stage of *niruddha* in which all functions and states of the mind are stopped and stilled into silence. In this condition the Yogin enters into what is called *asamprajñāta* samadhi in which all experiences of the subject and the outer objects are completely blotted out, leaving a blissful void in the individual in which nothing is known or thought by the mind, in which all relation and terms of relations cease to exist. The normal relation between the subject and the object, the knower and the known, the relations of coexistence and causality in space and time, all such relations are abrogated in the singleness of samadhi leading the Yogin into a state of blissful nothingness pervaded by complete stillness and the luminous Vastness of the Transcendent Self.

These five modalities of consciousness may also be represented as five concentric zones of consciousness of the mind. The two outermost zones of *kṣipta* and *mūḍha* are superficial and are in a state of constant flux, being open to the influences of the outer world and subject to the domination of extraneous forces of material Prakriti. They are common to all men who are yet completely engulfed in the folds of ignorance. In the third state, the *vikṣipta* condition of the mind, there is of course the emergence of sattva or the light of inwardness but still it is caught in the waves of rajas and tamas. In the *ekāgra* state there is a steady and firm convergence of the light of sattva and the concentration attains the character of single-pointedness. It is by this modality of mind that the limitations of mind can be exceeded and it is recommended by Patanjali as the *sine qua non* for entry into the state of samadhi which leads finally to *mokṣa*.

Of these five the first two are useless for Yoga, the third one can supply some ground for experimentation : in fact the beginner in the path of Yoga is usually bound to start with this vacillating type of Yoga but the more serious stages begin when the *ekāgra* condition is gained by the aspirant. There are, however, various types of *ekāgra* Yoga which we shall try to understand in the next article.

(To be continued)

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