

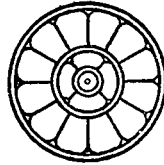
MOTHER INDIA

SEPTEMBER 1963

Price: Re. 1

Annual Subscription: Inland, Rs. 10.00: Foreign, Sh. 16 or \$ 2.50

Publication Office: Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry-2



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. XV

No. 8

"Great is Truth and it shall prevail"

CONTENTS

	<i>Page</i>
WORDS OF THE MOTHER To Anjana and Kiran	.. 5
TALKS WITH SRI AUROBINDO	<i>Nirodbaran</i> .. 6
OLD LONG SINCE (Translated by Parichand from the Tamil)	<i>Amrita</i> .. 10
SPIRITUAL CAUSERIE	<i>Prabuddha</i> .. 14
MYSTICS AND SOCIETY Chapter I : Mystics and Society	<i>Sisirkumar Ghose</i> .. 18
THE URGE FOR WHOLENESS	<i>Indra Sen</i> .. 26
NOLINI'S ATHLETICS	<i>Chinmoy</i> .. 31
INDIA AND AMERICA : A Dialoguc	<i>Tinkari Mitra</i> .. 36
CRESCENT MOON RANCH	<i>Sisirkumar Ghose</i> .. 41
A LETTER FROM AMERICA : To A. B. Purani	<i>Ida M. Roper</i> .. 48
WHEREFROM (Poem)	<i>Janina</i> .. 49

CONTENTS

		<i>Page</i>
FRENZY OF WORK (Poem)	<i>Har Krishan Singh</i>	.. 50
A SUPERNAL CALL (Poem)	<i>Amalesh Bhattacharya</i>	.. 50
EROICA (Poem)	<i>Niraman</i>	.. 51
MY MARVELLOUS MOTHER (Poem) Translated by Sisirkumar Ghose from the Bengali	<i>Nripendrakrishna Chattopadhyaya</i>	.. 53
UNFAMILIAR INDIA—III	<i>Compiled by K. D. Sethna</i>	.. 55

Students' Section

THE DESCENT OF THE BLUE : A Drama	<i>Chunmoy</i>	.. 57
T. S. ELIOT : "THE WASTE LAND"	<i>Norman Dowsett</i>	.. 61
INTROSPECTION IN EMILY DICKINSON	<i>C. Subbian</i>	.. 65
HOWLERS BY ENGLISH SCHOOLBOYS		.. 69

Published by P. Counouma
Printed at Sri Aurobindo Ashram Press, Pondicherry - 2

To be had of :

SRI AUROBINDO ASHRAM, PONDICHERRY

WORDS OF THE MOTHER

L'ART moderne est un essai, encore très maladroit, d'exprimer quelque chose d'autre que la simple apparence physique. L'idée est bonne — mais naturellement la valeur de l'expression dépend entièrement de la valeur de ce qui veut s'exprimer.

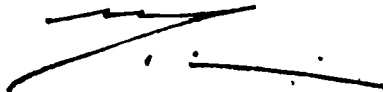
Pour le moment presque tous les artistes sont dans la conscience vitale et mentale la plus inférieure et les résultats sont assez pauvres.

Tâche de développer ta conscience, fais effort pour découvrir ton âme, et alors ce que tu feras sera vraiment intéressant.

12-8-1963

*
**

Pourquoi veux-tu faire des détails ? Ce n'est pas du tout nécessaire. La peinture n'est pas faite pour copier la Nature, mais pour exprimer une impression, un sentiment, une émotion que nous éprouvons en voyant la beauté de la Nature. C'est cela qui est intéressant et c'est cela qu'il faut exprimer et c'est parce que tu as la possibilité de faire cela que je t'encourage à peindre.



Modern art is an experiment, still very clumsy, to express something other than the simple physical appearance—the idea is good—but naturally the value of the expression depends entirely on the value of that which wants to express itself.

At present almost all artists live in the lowest vital and mental consciousness and the results are quite poor.

Try to develop your consciousness, endeavour to discover your soul, and then what you will do will be truly interesting.

12-8-1963

*
**

Why do you want to do the details ? They are not at all necessary. Painting is not done to copy Nature, but to express an impression, a feeling, an emotion that we experience on seeing the beauty of Nature. It is this that is interesting and it is this that has to be expressed, and it is because you have the possibility of doing this that I encourage you to paint.

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 right 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 thirty-first instalment in the new Series which, except on two occasions, has followed a chronological order and begun at the very beginning. The four earliest talks, after Sri Aurobindo's accident, appeared in Mother India 1952.)

FEBRUARY 3, 1939

N : A sadhika has written a letter. She relates in it her experiences : losing of consciousness and the mind floating about, as it were, lightning strokes in the head, feeling of some Presence. But she says that all these experiences give her a terrible fear, and she complains of bad health. The experiences have come to her at the very start of her practice of Yoga.

SRI AUROBINDO : You may tell her that what she calls losing of consciousness is the going inward of consciousness, the state of samadhi. It is extraordinary to get these experiences at the very outset. Usually one takes months and months to make the mind quiet—and she has done it at the first sitting ! The lightning stroke is the action of the Higher Power or Yoga Shakti to make the *ādhār* fit for Yoga. All this shows that she has capacity and can do Yoga. But she must get rid of fear. Otherwise all experiences will stop. The fear indicates that though her inner mind is ready her vital and physical beings are not—the one is full of fear and the other suffering from bad health, as she says. A conflict is produced in her, which is not desirable. It may be better not to take up Yoga seriously until she has restored her health. But the most important thing is to get rid of fear.

N : But how is one to get rid of it ?

SRI AUROBINDO : That is the difficulty many complain of. When one takes up Yoga, all sorts of experiences come in, which are beyond the ordinary consciousness. And if one fears, Yoga is not possible. It has to be got rid of by the

mind, by a psychological training and by will-power. Any human being worth the name has a will, and this will has to be exercised or developed. She can ask for protection of the Divine, lay herself in the hands of the Divine. As Vivekananda very insistently said, "*Abhi.*" The Yogi has no fear.

I don't know whether I have told you of an experience of mine. After my meeting with Lele, I was once meditating at Calcutta. I felt a tremendous calm and then it was as if my breath would stop. A silly fear or rather an apprehension caught hold of me and I said, "If my breath stops, how shall I live?" At once the experience ceased and never came back.

There are all sorts of experiences. What, for instance, would you do if you felt your head being drilled as if a nail were being thrust in? One feels also the splitting of the head in two or the bursting of it.

N : Why can't the experiences come in quietly?

SRI AUROBINDO : They do come in quietly but you make a row. If your physical body or head were being split, you could object; but you ought to know by now that all the Yogic experiences are in the subtle body.

N : I also once or twice had such fear as the lady speaks of—fear of a Presence. As soon as I sat to meditate before going to bed at about midnight, I felt everything so still and as if there were some Presence. That frightened me.

SRI AUROBINDO : Why? Did you think it was the Devil that brought in the stillness? But the Devil usually makes a commotion. Two things are necessary in Yoga : one is to get rid of fear and the other to know the ordinary symbols. (*Addressing P*) You know W. Once in meditation he saw golden gods coming down and telling him, "We will cut up your body and make it new." He cried out, "Never ! Never !" He thought his physical body was going to be cut up. But the symbolism is quite clear. It means that the old things in W's nature were to be thrown away and new things brought in.

P : I was surprised to hear that later he turned to Jainism.

SRI AUROBINDO : Was he a Jain by birth?

P : Yes.

SRI AUROBINDO : Well, such changes often happen. In one's vital and physical nature there remains a stamp of one's ancestral religion and it comes out some time. The Christians usually turn towards Roman Catholicism. A Frenchman—I forget his name—tried all sorts of things, European mysticism, Tibetan occultism, etc., and came into touch with Pavitra. Pavitra wrote to him, saying that these things wouldn't go with Yoga. The man broke the contact and turned towards Catholicism.

He wrote a book, stealing passages from Pavitra's letters and using them in support of Catholicism. It was this that disgusted Pavitra.

My grandfather started being a Brahmo and ended by writing a book on Hinduism and proclaiming it the best religion. Devendranath Tagore became rather anxious and feared he might run into excess of zeal.

After this the talk turned to politics and the work of the Leftists.

SRI AUROBINDO : The Leftists will probably pass laws abolishing the zemindars and the capitalists and spoil all the work done by the ministers. They will try to introduce social legislation and that will make the Governors use their powers. Or the Leftists may keep out of the Assemblies. It would be foolish to throw away the power given. I wrote before I left politics that if you get real power take it and fight for more, like De Valera in Ireland. De Valera took what was given and grabbed at more. In the present international situation, when the Government want to come to a compromise with the Congress you should accept what they give. Accept the Federation and fight against it afterwards.

N : That is also X's opinion, but he says that now is the time to press for Independence.

SRI AUROBINDO : That would be all right if the country were prepared for revolution, so that even if X and a few others were hanged the movement would go on and ultimately the Government would yield as in Ireland. There the people fighting against the Government risked their lives. If one is not prepared for that, one has to proceed in subtler ways. At present what X claims is impossible to get. It will only set the Government against you and they will try to crush the movement.

P : But if we work this provincial programme and prepare the country and at the same time press the Princely States to give rights to the people, then we might get what we want without all that revolution.

SRI AUROBINDO : Exactly. It is a very clever drive to bring in the States question and if they can carry it through, the Federation with the Princes will break down and then only the Muslim question will remain.

(*After a long pause*) The British people have one weakness. They can't go on with brutal methods of repression for a long time. They have their prestige to keep up before the world and they want popular support. So in the end they come to a compromise. France also comes to a compromise but takes a longer time. Some other nations won't hesitate to go to the extreme limit. In Palestine the British Government almost succeeded in crushing the Terrorists. If they had persisted they could have easily put Nashshibi against the Mufti and ruled the Arabs by the Arabs. But they could not go on and have now called the Palestine Conference. If the Mufti is clever he will be able to get a good deal.

In Ireland also the British came to a compromise. Even the Conservatives turned round. France gave in in Syria but the Syrians had to fight for it after the last war. In Tunisia they have clapped the Destourians in prison, but if the Nationalists keep up, France will give in.

P : Roosevelt's speech seems to have declared for democracy. In that

case the three powers combined may stem the tide of the dictators.

N : Now Hitler will think twice before he tries to do anything.

SRI AUROBINDO : Yes, if he is capable of thinking. His inner voice may ask him to push on. Mussolini may think twice, unless he is too Hitlerised. But then Hitler may say to him, "I have given you a chance for colonies. If you don't take it, I will go to the Ukraine." Mussolini may not like that. But Hitler also may not come to war. During the Czech crisis it was by mere bluff that he succeeded. He knew from private sources that England and France wouldn't fight.

P : Roosevelt has promised France armaments and America is selling aeroplanes, etc. That means they may come to her help in case she is attacked.

SRI AUROBINDO : But it is doubtful if Roosevelt can carry the nation with him. America has increased her armaments for her own defence. But if they are exported the people may think that it will involve them in a war. At any rate his speech has come as a great blow to both Germany and Italy. Chamberlain also may think of supporting France now. A remarkable man, this Roosevelt, very bold and ready to experiment and take risks. It is the old Roosevelt blood. Only, the first Roosevelt was brutally Fascist. This one is more refined.

P : Jean Herbert says there may not be any war after all.

SRI AUROBINDO : If the British and French people go on yielding to the demands of the dictators, there may not be any war. Perhaps the British may say to Germany, "We shall supply you with raw materials, you can come and settle comfortably here."

The topic of corruption in public life came up. Somebody said that in most countries the people in political power confer favours on their own men and are open to bribes.

SRI AUROBINDO : You will never find such corruption in England. Public life there is honest and sincere. Englishmen may tell lies and break their promises but bribery and appropriation of money hardly exist in their public or political administration. As they say, "These things are not done." If a political leader does them, he is finished for life. Thomas, you know, is wiped out. The English judges make no distinction between a rich criminal and a poor one.

OLD LONG SINCE

(8)

IN the year 1914 I had the darshan of the Mother. I could not perceive then that the Mother's was not an ordinary human birth. In 1914 the Mother came for the first time to the land of India, the decreed repository of spiritual riches.

As directed by Sri Aurobindo in 1910, the Mother reached Pondy on March 29, 1914. A few days after her arrival, Bejoykanta introduced me to her. How did he do it ? He introduced me as one of the students of the Calvé College and as one keen on practising Yoga.

The Mother lived in the house No. 3 facing the North, in Duplex Street. She had so much work to attend to that she met people only at an appointed time. Steps were taken even then to start the monthly review *Arya* both in English and in French.

Students from our school, in small groups, would come at their leisure hours to see the Mother. We did not know then who the Mother was.

At that time the book *Yogic Sadhan* could be seen in the hands of many of those persons who frequented Sri Aurobindo's house. This book Bejoykanta taught me. I did not consider him a teacher. The terms Guru, Acharya, teacher, instructor, preceptor were not current amongst us those days. All that we had been taught was social etiquette and hospitality, no one had given us any idea of modesty or humility or devotion.

Amidst all these superficialities I approached the Mother with the help of Bejoykanta. My dumb heart at once came to feel the magic power of the Mother. Over my poor heart lay loads of dirt. If one load dropped down, another would roll in to occupy the empty space.

In my first approaches to the Mother I thought her to be one like others. My mind's way led me in one direction, my heart's voiceless feeling led in another. I had not learnt at that time either to listen attentively to the still voice of the heart or, forgetting all outer hankerings, to feel the inner urge. The *tapasyā* perhaps that I had failed to do in my previous births I began doing now in this short span of life.

Had someone seen the Mother and myself seated on chairs, facing each other, almost as equals, with the book *Yogic Sadhan* in hand, he would have been in a fix to know who was teaching whom. In truth, however, I approached the Mother in the spirit of a seeker of knowledge.

The school remained closed two days per week—Sundays and Thursdays. On these two days, at 10 a.m., I would go to the Mother, study with her for half

an hour one or two pages of the *Yogic Sadhan*, proceed to Sri Aurobindo's house for his darshan and return home.

An image of immeasurable power—that was how I felt the Mother to be whenever I approached her. She, however, held that power in herself without allowing the least display of it. On some occasions the great power would shine forth irresistibly. Our inner sense would perceive this radiation if it was awake.

Not only myself but some of my friends of those days had felt certain necessary changes taking place, whether we had wanted them or not and without our being conscious of them, changes not only in our basic consciousness but in some of our external parts too. We would approach the Mother with our contradictory ideas and doubts and after a talk with her each one of us would be filled with an unaccountable purity and joy, and self-oblivious we would come back home talking merrily like people living in a happy world.

In this year 1914 Ramaswami Iyengar left Sri Aurobindo's house and started from Pondy for his native place. In this year 1914 again, during April and May, efforts were made, as I said, to bring out the monthly magazine *Arya*. On July 28 of this very year the First World War broke out. On August 15 the first issue of the *Arya* saw the light of day in English and French versions. In this 1914 indeed the foundation was laid of my close contact with Sri Aurobindo. And in this same year 1914 I began feeling like a simple child the Mother's continuous affection.

On August 15, 1914, Sri Aurobindo's birthday was celebrated more openly. In the spacious hall upstairs two or three big tables, taken on hire, were placed side by side; on them were spread thick washed sheets, white as Jasmynes; and above these sheets was heaped, mountain-like, milk-white rice. Finally, rose-petals were strewn over the rice.

At about 11.30 a.m. Sri Aurobindo came and stood in the long verandah, south of the hall, at the western end and, looking at us eastwards, spoke something in English for two or three minutes.

Ten or fifteen persons only out of those who had assembled that day stayed behind for sometime and I was one of these few. I do not remember now where the Mother was, where she sat and took her food.

In October 1914, I suppose, Abdul Karim, a chief C.I.D. inspector of the Madras Presidency sought Sri Aurobindo's permission for an interview. I do not remember the date. He was asked to come on a particular day at 10 a.m. for the interview. Abdul Karim came on that day in time and met Sri Aurobindo. The talk must have lasted for more than half an hour in private. While going to Sri Aurobindo Abdul Karim had carried a big rose-garland and two or three plates full of fruits, etc. Not being an inmate of Sri Aurobindo's house, I had no means of knowing what transpired between them. Even if I had been an inmate, Sri Aurobindo would have said only what could be dis-

closed. It was rumoured in Pondicherry that the talk must have been mainly about the World War and Abdul Karim sought to know Sri Aurobindo's views about it.

One or two months passed after the outbreak of the World War. Nolini Kanta Gupta and Saurindranath Bose who had gone to Bengal came back hurriedly to Pondicherry. Now Bejoykanta also grew impatient to go to Bengal like them for a short visit. He persisted in it. Sri Aurobindo gave no consent to it. Bejoykanta's friends in Pondicherry and some others, including Abdul Karim, had come to know that he was about to leave for Bengal.

Either the very next day after Abdul Karim's interview with Sri Aurobindo or one or two days later, Bejoykanta started for Bengal. The news circulated in the town that, as Bejoykanta was suspected to be a revolutionary, a warrant of arrest was in Abdul Karim's pocket the very day of his interview with Sri Aurobindo.

Bejoykanta started from Sri Aurobindo's house and caught the train to Madras. Directly he crossed the French border he was arrested and taken into police custody at Cuddalore; he was then transferred a few days later to his native place in Bengal and interned there till the end of the War, that is to say, five long years. As soon as he got released he came back to Pondicherry.

Before the publication of the *Arya*, it was widely talked about—and most amongst the Tamil poet Bharati and his friends—that a Review of the kind was soon going to be published. The idea also spread, along with the talk, that a new age was about to dawn, this new age was for the whole human race and Sri Aurobindo was the Rishi of this new age. Poet Bharati was chiefly instrumental in spreading the idea.

I was fortunate enough to hear many say several times that the *Arya* would elucidate the secrets of the Veda and, as a corollary, unravel many a knot, till now unloosened, in the Upanishads, Itihasas, Puranas, etc. I heard many also declare that Sri Aurobindo had found a new method of Yoga for the sake of mankind and would divulge in the *Arya* the characteristic process of sadhana for following this method.

Hardly a month had passed since the declaration of the great War when I heard elderly people, rich in knowledge, affirm that the World War was but the unhealed sore in the human consciousness and the appearance of the *Arya* was destined to heal the sore. I could not grasp all that clearly then.

One day at the beginning of September I took up a copy of the first issue of the *Arya* from the table on the long verandah upstairs of Sri Aurobindo's house and started reading the first article of the series, "The Life Divine", written by Sri Aurobindo, just loudly enough for myself to hear. I read it over and over again. Great thoughts clothed in great words—I could not at all comprehend! However, it was sweet to read and re-read it. It was as if someone else in me was comprehending all that was read!

As I was reading, Sri Aurobindo came, stood in front of the table and kept listening to my reading. When I put down the copy of the *Arya* and lifted my head I saw Sri Aurobindo standing there. I told him that the reading was delightful but nothing could be grasped.

Sri Aurobindo heard all that I said and replied, "It is not necessary to understand it all at once. Go on reading. If you find a joy in reading, you need not stop it."

Anyone may perceive in Sri Aurobindo's writings a wealth of experiences, a mantric power and an extraordinary superhuman attraction. That first sublime article in the *Arya* begins with one or two Riks from the Rig Veda.

Hear :

"She follows to the goal of those that are passing on beyond, she is the first in the eternal succession of the dawns that are coming,—Usha widens bringing out that which lives, awakening someone who was dead ..What is her scope when she harmonises with the dawns that shone out before and those that now must shine ? She desires the ancient mornings and fulfils their Light; projecting forward her illumination, she enters into communion with the rest that are to come."

Kutsa Angirasa—Rig Veda I.113.8.10.

Without being conscious of my relation with the Mother before and after my birth on this earth I felt a child's love for her at the very outset.

The Mother left for France in February 1915. I too went to Madras for the Matriculation examination that very year.



AMRITA

SPIRITUAL CAUSERIE

I THINK it was in the *Hindu Magazine* Section. They had published, some years ago, a brilliant story of a strange case of hypnotism. It was not clear how far it was based on facts. All the same it produced an indelible impression on my mind and marked a turn in my thinking on the occult side of things. An experienced hypnotist is working on a friend. After the subject is put into a trance, he is asked to narrate the events in his life five years ago; the answers are clear and vivid. Ten years ago; the replies are equally fluent. Twenty years ago, thirty years ago, when he was only five : at this stage the subject starts behaving like an infant of that age and with appropriate gestures speaks falteringly. A hundred years ago : without difficulty the subject tells of happenings in his past birth. Excited by curiosity, the hypnotist asks him what happened two hundred years earlier and then still earlier, till the subject starts jabbering in a peculiar manner and behaving like a monkey. Just at that moment there is a loud explosion in the laboratory and the 'monkey' starts up and jumps out through the window. The hypnotist is alarmed and rushes out pursuing the 'monkey' which cannot be found. The subject under spell goes flying from house-top to house-top and refuses to come back and makes himself scarce. And it is only after a long period of suspense and effort that the 'monkey' is coaxed to come again into the room where he is forcibly put to sleep enabling the hypnotist to work upon him in the reverse direction till the relevant human stage is reached and, to the relief of all, he wakes up as if from deep sleep.

As a sketch of the theoretical possibilities of the technique of hypnotism, the story was indeed original, and its purport could not be missed. But I never thought seriously of the practical implications of the matter till the other day when a book *Le Dominicain Blanc* by Gustav Meyrink came into my hands.

Gustav Meyrink (1868-1932) was an Austrian writer who was considered to be the most notable literary medium in Europe in the last century. Introducing his work, M Gerard Heym states in his illuminating preface that Meyrink was passionately interested in occult phenomena and his entire life was one long quest for the Esoteric Knowledge of different traditions. He assimilated the knowledge of a special line of Yoga and developed the potentialities of his being to a remarkable extent, acquiring in the process immense powers of clairvoyance and developing capacities to function as a medium to a surpassing degree. He helped many by the exercise of his powers of telepathy, materialisation, etc. But his one preoccupation was always his quest for the Higher Knowledge, the Wisdom of God. He utilised his occult capacities to enter into

the original stream of these old traditions which still live in their own formulations somewhere in the earth-atmosphere, integrate himself into their flow and even obtain an initiation "as if by reflection in a mirror". That is to say, he projected himself in his subtle body into the influence of the Masters of the chosen tradition—on their own planes of functioning—and sought their instruction. And, we are told, some of the living adepts came to admire him as a 'brother'. It was thus that he acquired a profound degree of knowledge of the ancient traditions, occult and spiritual. But he could not, the writer notes, reach the supreme realisation because his whole life was vitiated by a certain disequilibrium resulting from an excessive hatred for his mother.

The circumstances in which he came to write this book in question are again interesting.

It was in 1870 that three articles¹ on Taoism by Dr. A.Pfitzmaier, a noted Sinologist, were published in the Austrian press. The writings caused a great stir and the learned professor was prevailed upon not to pursue the subject further as the general mind of the public was said to be not yet ripe for that Teaching, and no more was heard of it. But Meyrink had read some of them and he was at once fired with enthusiasm powerful enough to lead him to 'contact' the ancient tradition of the Tao.

What is there in Tao, it may be asked, to raise so much furore? What again is the element that is not found in its books but is in the preserve of adepts requiring occult means for communication? M.Heym explains that Taoism, in the first place, is not confined to China. In fact, it is older than the Chinese civilisation. It was in the closing years of the Sung dynasty, when the country was faced with the invasions of the Mongols, that many of the Masters of Tao left the country with their sacred lore to safeguard their heritage and migrated and settled down in more hospitable environments. Similar migrations took place when Confucianism came into ascendancy and persecuted the older faith. Some spread themselves in Europe, some in the countries of Islam, it was here in the Islamic regions that the adepts developed and perfected the science of Alchemy which was an integral part of their tradition.

To the layman Tao is a way of deliverance. To the initiate it is a way of Immortality. Like all the ancient traditions, Tao has an esoteric aspect side by side with the exoteric. The esoteric teaching has for its goal the attainment of Immortality and it is meant only for the elite who are considered fit to enter into their order of hierarchy.

Now the summit of this pyramid of the esoteric hierarchy consists of adepts called the Immortals numbering about a dozen. Immortality in this

¹ "The Real Men and the Immortals in Taoism", "Dissolution of the Corpse and the Sword", "Some Points in Taoism".

context means the immortality of the body by the creation of a subtle body which is almost physical but extremely purified. And this body and the mind that inhabits it stay immortal.

There are several ways for achieving this immortality of the body. One is to use what is known as the elixir of long life, consisting of a mysterious substance with intensely active properties. Another method is a complicated technique of breathing exercises combined with visual concentration upon some of the active centres in the body. Another discipline that has been woven into this process is the tantric technique of a unique union of the two principles in creation, viz. the masculine and the feminine, which precipitates a state of transcendent bliss.

Gustav Meyrink was drawn to esoteric Tao like iron to a magnet and took to his quest with all his customary zeal. He drew upon his clairvoyant powers to seek out the old Masters and put himself into contact with them—Masters in their subtler worlds. He practised and succeeded in identifying himself with the Path to such an extent that he was able to penetrate into its secrets and integrate himself with its current. *Le Dominicain Blanc* is a graphic record of his experiences and realisations in this field in the form of a story.

The Way that is sketched out in the narration is known as the Path of Shi-Kiai. It consists of the dissolution of the body, followed by the dissolution of the mystic Sword which makes its appearance on the disappearance of the body, and then the projection of the subtle body which is called the body of resurrection. This new body may become visible or may remain invisible to the gross eye.

M. Heym draws attention to the existence in Europe of the tradition of the dissolution of the body and its reconstitution or resurrection by means of an alchemic process. He cites the instance of the great adept in Germany, Hon. Schmidt (18th century A.D.), who made a successful experiment in this direction. Schmidt had an elixir placed in his coffin. When the physical body was dead, his subtle body and mind got disengaged from it and the elixir dissolved the physical body. Thereafter there was the act of palingenesis effected through an alchemic method, utilising the cosmic forces in creation directed by the will of a master-chemist who, though not on the earth, could still exercise and effectuate his will from his plane because he had attained the status and consciousness of an Immortal. This master created, around the 'envelope' abandoned by the physical body, a body extremely sensitive, with exactly the same form, the same functions as the original normal body.

But the Taoists of the tradition here described do not resort to alchemic means for the dissolution of the body. They do this by means of their own processes of control and direction of life-breath. The dissolution proceeds through a series of steps culminating in a state of 'nothingness'. Then commences the process of re-creation by the exercise of the will and the special

technique perfected by them. This progressive transformation of the living body into an immortal body could be effected equally, as stated earlier, by the profound tantric process based on the union of the male and the female principles in creation. This technique of the Tantra is linked by the Taoists to their own method of breathing exercises. And it is this combination which is described in its operation by Meyrink in his interesting story build round the figure of Colombier who arrives at his goal of immortality with the aid of Ophelia, his 'sister-soul', who dies with a purpose, gets assimilated in her femininity with the masculine in the hero and helps him to emerge into a new state of perfection.

PRABUDDHA

MYSTICS AND SOCIETY

(Continued from August)

CHAPTER I

"Who are these men and what are these words they speak?"

"ATTEMPTS are sometimes made to have done finally with questionings which have so often been declared insoluble by logical thought¹ and to persuade men to limit their mental activities to the practical and immediate problems of their material existence in the universe; but such evasions are never permanent in their effect. Mankind returns from them with a more vehement impulse of inquiry or a more violent hunger for immediate solution. By that hunger mysticism² profits and new religions arise to replace the old that have been destroyed or stripped of significance by a scepticism which could not satisfy because although its business was inquiry it was unwilling sufficiently to inquire."³ Thus spake Sri Aurobindo.

In other words, mysticism can change, it cannot die. When everything else fails, or will ultimately fail, it stands its ground. Our extremity is God's opportunity. Amid the disasters of our own time, more eyes are turning towards it as the only way out. Modern man, as Jung put it, is in search of his soul. Of that search mysticism is both cause and goal, of this deeper finding and possibility the mystics have been pioneers ever. But what, precisely, is the possibility and whom does the mystic seek? Briefly, and paradoxically, the mystic seeks himself, to know himself. Our search for the Self is moved by the Self. "Yes, 'Know Thyself' is still the key to wisdom...and this self-knowledge as developed in Hindu psychology," says one exponent of one school of mysticism, "is the way to freedom, truth and harmonious living."⁴ The injunction: "Know Thyself" carries with it the suggestion that we probably do not know ourselves, or not sufficiently. A working knowledge we all have, often that is all we have, but rarely the much more that we need to know and become. To become what we are, that is what the rare man, the mystic, seeks. "No one can teach another how to acquire it."⁵ But, as Evelyn Underhill tells us, this is "an innate tendency of the human spirit towards complete harmony with the transcendental order. . . . I believe this movement to represent the true line of development of the highest form of human consciousness."⁶ How to acquire this? Luckily, the intelligent being, if he so likes, carries within him the wherewithal to surpass himself.⁷

But, as we have just now said, the knowledge or experience is essentially solo. No one gives it to another.

“I am told that you possess the pearl of divine knowledge; either give it to me or sell it to me.”

“I cannot sell it for you have not the price thereof, and if I give it to you, you will have gained it too cheaply. You do not know its value. Cast yourself headlong, like me, into this ocean in order that you yourself may find the pearl.”⁸

The history of this human seeking or becoming is man's true history as it is also the secret burden of his existence. The saints and seers, of all ages and countries, known and unknown, bear testimony to this endless adventure of man. This is the journey of journeys, of man and Magi. So far such men, the yogis and mystics, have been a rarity, stars that mostly dwelt apart, but they need not be so aloof and such oddities for all times. As even a critical observer could not help saying : “Alas ! quixotic enough sometimes” mysticism is “one of the most significant chapters of the history of humanity.”⁹ In a sense of course “all life is yoga” and it is not impossible to imagine a community where the mystic impulse and effort are not only better understood but form a normal part of the social setting. If this ever happens, the treasures of the spirit, or what we have called mysticism, might prove to be of greater worth than what most of us have allowed ourselves to imagine. Mysticism which has been usually treated as an ego-centric, abnormal, escapist¹⁰ activity, is in fact an escape from the ego and an encounter with the totality of experience, or Reality. As its concern is with the Real, and “the need to be real”, it must be held to be a realisable ideal in both our individual and collective life, provided we are prepared to pay the price, that is, fulfil the conditions. The Buddha has described the nature and result of acquiring such a new centre of personality, *Brahma-vihāra*, thus :

“Do not deceive each other, do not despise anybody anywhere, never in anger wish anyone to suffer through thy body, words or thoughts. Like a mother nourishing her only child with her own life, keep thy immeasurable loving thought for all creatures.

“Above thee, below thee, on all sides of thee, keep on all the world thy sympathy and immeasurable loving thought, which is without obstruction, without any wish to injure, without enmity.

“To be dwelling in such contemplation while standing, walking, lying down, until sleep overcomes thee, is called living in Brahman.”

Who will say that the ideal is not real or that it is not needed today ? Perhaps today more than ever before. But today is everyday. That also is part of the wisdom. What will be the nature of such a life, today, we cannot foresee much less demand. Obviously much that is normal to our present ways of seeing and living will no longer be so. One is however permitted to think that the difficulties of a slow and painful evolution in the midst of which we

find ourselves will turn out to be a test and an opportunity and find their justification. And though it may be the hard way, in the end there will be no other. But when one thinks of the complexities of our present social and intellectual Organization Man the yoke of the mystics is light indeed.

Mysticism, which is the heart of religion, is always attempting an answer to the old, agonising question : What is Man ? As one looks around, above, below and within, one sees life as the first mystery of our existence, life occult and vibrant in an otherwise dead and inert universe. But it is not till mind appears on the scene that the mystery becomes a problem. The thinking reed is miserable because it thinks. Till the time he can open or overpass himself in a consciousness more than the mental, the son of man has no rest in his wanderings in the Valley of False Glimmer, the labyrinths of illusion, unreality and appearance. In a sense all problems begin and end with the mind, which has sometimes been called reality-killer.

Leaving such metaphysical ideas aside, the problem that weighs most with modern humanity is the just accommodation of its scientific technique with a rational organisation that will make life worth living for the vast majority, which at present it clearly is not. There is nothing unusual or unnatural about the attempt, except perhaps the manner of it, which is the reason why it has failed. The issue is plain : what is the truth or nature of things and how are we to embody it in our social living ? This has been a human concern throughout all history and in their attempts at solution men have experimented with every form of social reasoning and social organisation. Yet the amount of human misery remains much the same and human nature perhaps as unregenerate as ever. Is history, then, a vicious circle ? Endgame ?

In a mood of enforced sobriety we begin to wonder if there has not been some gap or *lacuna*, some miscalculation somewhere, a fatal weakness in our equipment, or Achilles' heel. Maybe we have not been so much sinful as ignorant. But, of course, the sin of pride has been there always. Since the days of the Renaissance there has indeed been a boom in the pride industry.

But man, proud man,
Dressed in a little brief authority,
Most ignorant of what he's most assured,
His glassy essence, like an angry ape,
Plays such fantastic tricks before high heaven
As make the angels weep.

But most ignorance is vincible and the ape may be teachable, at least some have been. Amid the clash of slogans and competing panaceas, all in full panoply, the voice of conscience or the time-spirit seems to point to ends and means which we have neglected and left aside as unimportant and inessential. The

stone which the builders rejected is now become the cornerstone. Mysticism, often "shy to illumine", may yet be the light we need, the light we lost. For we are no longer fooled or hypnotised by the limited and ignoble ideals of the economic or the psychotic man, by unethical technological progress, by the regimented State or the 'Big Brother', with his big stick of lying propaganda, war and revolution and total destruction. To accept or acquiesce in these pernicious versions of necessity and progress—and the low idea of human nature on which these seem to be based—is to accept the part for the whole, the end of man. It can lead us only into deeper difficulties. To the prophets of such violent and collective cure one can only say : You are not the doctor but the disease.

It is exactly here that mysticism, almost never tried as a social experiment, except in closed and curious communities, opens up a new prospect. It is the utility of yoga, Sri Aurobindo has said, that it opens to us a gate of escape out of the vicious circle of our ordinary human existence, brings a ray of hope into the darkness of our fallen existence.¹¹ Sheer force of circumstances compel us to face and look for help to the community of saints and seers, yogis and mystics whom we had so long cheerfully, even enthusiastically, given short shrift, neglected during the Age of Reason which has so readily now turned into an Age of Anxiety. History which has been largely played round the Odd Man Out theme may yet find its saviour. Today there is no justification to continue the old blissful ignorance about mystics and mysticism. We have, in self-defence if for no other reason, to take note of their experience, doctrine, or metaphysics, their psychology and, if one may say so, their sociology. Or perish. To refuse to listen to them is not advisable. That many of our thinkers—Gerald Heard, Aldous Huxley and Pitrim Sorokin, among others—should seem to echo or speak in terms of mystical insight, analysis and approach is not surprising. Perhaps there was never an age more open to these ideas. We are probably moving towards a Yogi Age.

Among recent works which focussed attention on the subject—mainly perhaps because of a catchy title—is *The Yogi and the Commissar* by Arthur Koestler. According to him, the issues of modern life depend upon two types of people or attitude, between what he calls Change from Within and Change from Without.¹² Both have their dilemmas. At the end of his book Koestler confesses, "Neither the saint nor the revolutionary can save us; only the synthesis of the two. Whether we are capable of achieving it, I do not know." Naturally, he does not, being neither. (His later researches show him to be completely unfit for the undertaking.) On the nature of the synthesis he has little to say except to use the word. The need for it is, however, more crucial than an intellectual flirting with ideas can ever know. Unless, therefore, the human race is to fall by the wayside, it must seek the synthesis. Of course one is not to expect a fiat, an easy, magical victory. There may be more hardships, of read-

justment, than we can imagine. After all, the way of the mystics is largely one of self-mortification and crises of decision, it involves an ardour and austerity of the spirit which it would be foolish to minimise. The ancient seers did not exaggerate when they spoke of the Way as sharp as the razor's edge, difficult of going, hard to traverse, *Kṣurasya dhārā mṣitā duratyayā*. It is also possible that mysticism, as we have known it in the past, might change its forms, or some of its forms, beyond recognition. But, always, it will be a variation on the same theme, of man at his highest.

To the question : 'How can the mystics help and what have we to learn from them ?' it can be safely pointed out that what the mystics have to give us is a profounder self-knowledge and world-knowledge, an integral view of existence most likely to preserve us from our present pitfalls. The mystics see clearly, correctly and comprehensively. As *Theologica Germanica* points out, "Now the created soul of man has also two eyes. The one is the power of seeing into eternity, the other of seeing into time and the creatures." The mystic uses both eyes, if not all mystics, at least the greater ones who have seen the deepest into the life of things and the mysteries of integration. Nor is their insight a product of their social ineptitude and unawareness. On the contrary, as Simone Weil has shown, to contemplate the social scene is as effective a purification as to withdraw from the world. It is only the terms of reference that are different. The mystic is as much interested in man as anybody. In fact, he has more to offer. So, we can add, the art and science of contemplation, as mysticism is usually referred to in the West, will show, among other things, the interrelation of God, Nature and Man.

Briefly, the mystics, or contemplatives, will help us in at least four related and useful ways : they will correct our inadequate world-view; they will point out the right methods for making this world-view effective in our lives; this they will do, not by any 'escape' (one word too often profaned) from life but by adding to it; finally, they will do this not in the life of the individual alone but also in the life of the group or society as a whole. Incidentally, they will correct the fallacies and limitations of the technique of violent revolutions, our obsession with matter and physical force as the only weapon or 'midwife' of social change. A survey of mysticism, honestly carried out, is likely to provide us with hope and understanding, and a course of action that alone makes sense and has a right to succeed.

Some of the functions of the mystical attitude and experiment cannot help being negative or purgative. But on the whole its direction and result will be positive. Mild-eyed but vigilant (while others slept), the "sleepless ones" help to keep the world "disinfected," as Aldous Huxley once put it with the help of a detergent formula. "The mystics," he said, "are a channel through which a little knowledge of reality filters down to our human universe of ignorance and illusion. A totally unmystical world would be a world totally blind

and insane. The mystic, truly understood, puts back more into society than any other individual or group. As Bennett suggested, mysticism represents "a type of mind . . . which the institution does not and cannot produce. . . Yet while it cannot produce, it can and must make use of, the radical. Its very life depends on so doing. The institution which affects to see in him an enemy is excommunicating one who is fitted to keep in touch with the renewing sources of its own life."

These are, it will be seen, large claims which this essay cannot hope to 'prove' or substantiate. The truths we are dealing with are largely self-evident or nothing. But men have been blessed with the right to refuse, to say 'No' to a Christ or a Buddha. The freedom is still freely used. We shall be content if we can provide a possibility, presumption or hypothesis, if we can raise the old questions, questions which we ignore at our peril. For our part we admit the actuality of a unitive truth, of a Knowledge, more self-fulfilled or revealed, as some would say, than this our all-too-human knowledge, "this limited consciousness in whose narrow borders we grope and struggle". Further, we take our stand that spiritual evolution is a fact, perhaps the most important fact about us. From this it follows that a community of saints or gnostic beings, *sādhūnām rājyam*, or a Kingdom of Heaven upon Earth, is a realisable ideal and must one day be realised. The future belongs to the mystics, not as a sect but as an image of man to be. Microcosm of the macrocosm, man starts from animal vitality and its activities but a self-fulfilled divine life is what he is secretly after, his true objective. The mystics have been usually credited with the technique of deliverance or escape from the wheels of becoming, *samsāra*, into some ineffable Nirvana or the heavens beyond. They may yet prove to be the architects of the "rainbow bridge marrying the soil to the sky," *amṛtasya setuḥ*. Craftsman of the divine plan, they carry with them the misus of the deity within and the tools of the transition, in theory as in practice. Yoga is praxis, nothing if not skill in works, as Krishna says. The mystics always emphasize the need for seeing clearly and for self-exceeding instead of muddling through or whirling round the mud and filth of assertive egos, dictatorships, plutocratic or proletarian, or the tepid democracies of shopkeepers with nothing high or ideal to sustain them for long except as an endless game for politicians and the worldly-minded to play, since they know no other. Yoga or mysticism is a know-how like any other to deliver us from the damnation of our ways. We have not seen the last of it yet.

(To be continued)

ŚIRKUMAR GHOSH

NOTES

1. One of the earliest and well-known works on this subject concludes with the following not very bright but quite damaging observation: "It (mysticism) shall be called Bottom's dream, because it hath no bottom."—Vaughan, *Hours with the Mystics*, 1856. In more sober language, "Neither the word nor the thing is in good standing among us today."—C. A. Bennett, *A Philosophical Study of Mysticism*, 70. "Today," or was it "yesterday"? As Dean Inge pointed out, in *Christian Mysticism*: "The word mysticism has been almost always used in a slightly contemptuous sense in the nineteenth century. It was supposed to indicate something repugnant to the robust common sense and virile rationality of the British character." God bless the "virile rationality" of the British character!
2. As Stace has pointed out, "The very word 'mysticism' is an unfortunate one...better if we could use the words 'enlightenment' or 'illumination' which are commonly used in India." (*Mysticism and Philosophy*, 15.) This is quite true. "There is probably no more misused word in these our days than 'mysticism'."—Dom Cuthbert Butler, *Western Mysticism*, 3.
3. Sri Aurobindo, *The Life Divine*, Ch. I. Also see W. R. Inge, *Christian Mysticism*, 5-6.
4. Swami Akhilananda, *Hindu Psychology*, 22.
5. Waite, *Lamps of Western Mysticism*, 243.
6. Evelyn Underhill, *Mysticism*, Preface.
7. Lecomte du Nouÿ, *Human Destiny*, 153.
8. Junayid.
9. Robert Alfred Vaughan, *Hours with the Mystics*, 27, xxxiii.
10. "The empire of illusion," Kant called it in a moment of un-inspiration. The word "escape" or "flight" does not have a particularly happy association. But really it is not so simple, not a negation but a strategic movement of withdrawal. There are circumstances when "flight from the times is the only proper position" to take. Also, be it noted, there "are various kinds of escapism; the mystics are not the only culprits."—W. R. Inge, *Mysticism in Religion*, 146.
11. "Is there then an unbridgable gulf between that which is beyond and that which is here or are they two perpetual opposites and only by leaving this adventure in Time behind, by overleaping the gulf can man reach the Eternal?... That is what seems to be at the end of one line of experience. ...But there is also this other and indubitable experience that the Divine is here in everything as well as above and behind everything... It is a significant and illuminating fact that the Knower of Brahman even moving and acting in this world, even bearing all its shocks, can live in some absolute peace, light and beatitude of the Divine. There is then here something other than that mere trenchant opposition—there is a mystery, a problem which one would think must admit of some less desperate solution. This spiritual possibility points beyond itself and brings a ray of hope into the darkness of our fallen existence."—Sri Aurobindo, *On Yoga*, I, 25-6.

12. The mystic is never a peddler in petty reforms. But, as we shall see, his presence rouses resentment. On two grounds : first, self-respect causes us to regard such intrusion as an intolerable impertinence; secondly, the would-be reformer is guilty of impertinence. This is the observation of a philosophical critic, C. A. Bennett. It may be said, in defence, that no genuine mystic ever dreams of "intruding" or imposing his will on others. Sorokin, though he does not speak entirely from the mystical standpoint, is nearer the truth. "Our remedy demands a complete change of the contemporary mentality, a fundamental transformation of our system of values, and the profoundest modification of our conduct toward other men, cultural values, and the world at large." *The Crisis of Our Age*, 321. Again : For "a transformation of the mentality of Western culture" he does not believe in any "recommendation of purely mechanical communistic or totalitarian 'socialization' and 'communization'.. Such mechanical procedure can give only the same disastrous results for society as they have invariably given before....There must be a change of the whole mentality and attitude in the direction of the norms prescribed in the Sermon on the Mount. When such a change occurs, to a notable degree the technical ways of remodelling the economic and political structures in this direction become easy. Without this change, no mechanical, politico-economic reconstruction can give the desired results."—*Ibid.*, 319.

The distinction—or difference—between the two methods have been stated by Sri Aurobindo with his usual clarity and competence. "The churning of Matter by the....human intellect to conquer material Nature and use it for its purpose may break something of the passivity and inertia, but it is done for material ends, in a *rājasic* spirit, with a denial of spirituality as its mental basis. Such an attempt may end, seems to be ending indeed, in chaos and disintegration, while the new attempts at creation and reintegration seem to combine the obscure rigidity of material Nature with a resurgence of the barbaric brutality and violence of a half-animal vital Nature. How are the spiritual forces to deal with all that or make use of such a churning of the energies of the material universe ? The way of the Spirit is the way of peace and light and harmony; if it has to battle, it is precisely because of the presence of such forces which seek either to extinguish or to prevent the spiritual light . . .Materialism can hardly be spiritual in its basis, because its basic method is just the opposite of the spiritual way of doing things. The spiritual works from within outwards, the way of materialism is to work from out inwards. It makes the inner the result of the outer, fundamentally a phenomenon of Matter and it works upon that view of things. It seeks to 'perfect' humanity by outward means and one of its main efforts is to construct a perfect social machine which will train and oblige men to be what they ought to be. The loss of the ego in the Divine is the spiritual ideal; here it is replaced by the immolation of the individual to the military and industrial State. Where is there any spirituality in all that ?" *On Yoga*, I, 8-9.

THE URGE FOR WHOLENESS

(PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS TO THE 33RD INDIAN SCIENCE CONGRESS:
SECTION OF PSYCHOLOGY AND EDUCATIONAL SCIENCE)

(Continued from August)

WE have throughout emphasised that a wide survey of the evolutionary process and its important stages and facts should be the basis of a comprehensive psychological theory. A theory so widely based will alone be able to give a comprehensive explanation of the varied spheres of psychological life. We have already shown how our theory is capable of explaining and reconciling the facts of normal and abnormal psychology as also of religious and mystic life. Here we will do well to provide the facts of the evolutionary background of our theory a little more fully.

Accepting McDougall's marks of behaviour for determining conscious action, we find the amoeba our practical starting-point, though as the same author says "there is no obvious lower limit to the scale of purposiveness". The principle of continuity too is today empirically better founded than it ever was and that too would forbid us to assert abrupt beginnings in nature. The emergence of consciousness we notice in the amoeba must therefore be rather supposed to have arisen out of a substratum of the subconscious, which we might call the Primordial Unconscious. Now out of this tiny but widening flicker of the amoeba's conscious as the animal species advance a secondary unconscious is progressively formed. This field of the unconscious needs to be distinguished from that of the Primordial Unconscious for the reason that its contents have been in consciousness and are for that reason more easily available to consciousness again. This secondary unconscious advances in extent as the species of organic life evolve more complex forms of life. Homo Sapiens, when he appears, has a substantially wider consciousness, but he has a still wider secondary unconscious embodying the whole history of animal evolution. The experiments and experiences of the preceding animal species are in substance available to Homo Sapiens. The wild life of Homo Sapiens soon develops into the primitive life of man. Institutions begin slowly to grow and mould his life. But a long time does really separate the modern man from the beginnings of those institutions, when the civilising process started. The primitive man's experience of attempts at civilised life constitutes in itself a vast realm of the unconscious. This is the same as Jung's racial unconscious. The modern adult man's make-up is evidently very vast and complex. His range of the conscious is wide. That

yields to him a rich harvest of personal experience constituting a further field of the unconscious, which is the personal unconscious. It, however, stands upon the foundation of the racial unconscious containing all the archetypes of motivations, detected by Jung, finding expression in the general trends and symbolisms of human mythology, dreams, etc. Next to that comes the unconscious conserving the experiences of the animal ancestry going back to the very beginnings of life. And then must come the general base of the Primordial Unconscious out of which the first emergence of consciousness must have taken place.

The successive layers of the unconscious constitute the past, the history of the modern adult. It is a tremendous task to explore even in a small measure the contents that lie therein at its various strata. Freud and Jung have had the daring, patience and penetration to probe into the secrets of the unconscious, and by having tackled nature in its obscurest and most difficult regions have rendered real yeoman's service to all science.

What are the general types of relation between the conscious and the unconscious is a question of very great importance. Repression is one general relation, involving a variety of modes of relation as represented by the different forms of defence reactions. Besides that, there is another kind of relation, the one obtaining in a process of growth between the present stage and the preceding stages. In the case of repression the unconscious is in opposition to the conscious, which holds it down by main force; in the other case the unconscious is in co-operation with the conscious, undertaking to execute mechanically a host of movements and relieve the conscious for tackling situations needing attention. But in its co-operation there is an essential opposition. The unconscious has indeed contributed to growth, but it imposes a limitation upon the conscious inasmuch as the unconscious is not amenable to a conscious control. It is a mechanising force and tendency. The growth and the working of habit illustrates the action of the unconscious clearly. Habit is truly a principle of economy in life. The child progressively relegates to habits the newly acquired reactions so that it may go ahead with the mastery of fresh tasks. But it hardly needs much evidence to show that habit is also a limiting factor upon human character, felt most acutely where new situations demand new adjustments. The consciousness then feels restricted and cramped by the existing mechanisations of life's energy. The pedagogic principle advocated by Rousseau, that no habits should be formed, recognised at the least the limitation which habit imposes upon conscious guidance and control of life.

The unconscious seems to be the sphere of mechanical working within the general purposive scheme of organic life. That incidentally shows the role that mechanical action might play in the general scheme of teleological behaviour.

The above is too general a characterisation of the evolutionary process of consciousness and also of the relation between the conscious and the uncon-

scious. Surely the evolution is an experimental process and the growth of consciousness has not taken place in a straight line. There has been much trial and error and the detailed facts of evolution bear out that there have been abortive attempts and regressions, fixations and a lot of other faulty movements. But on the whole, it is evident that there has been a progress in the measure and efficiency of consciousness. Virtually we could say that evolution represents an urge for ever greater consciousness, but that is really equal to saying that it is moved by an urge for wholeness or whole living, as clearly expressed in the modern man, since that too involves the progressive conquest of the unconscious by the conscious. Thus a general survey of the evolutionary process does suggest and support the thesis we have presented.

Our thesis can yet claim a further merit. We had stated in the beginning of our exposition that the contemporary schools of psychology present a problem of the first order to any comprehensive psychological theory. Now it appears to us that our thesis is capable of showing a way of reconciliation among these schools. This it achieves through an essential widening of the concept of the psyche. To the conscious and the subconscious it discovers and adds the superconscious. The superconscious to it is an implication of evolution itself. Just as any stage of evolution, whatever it be, has its present character and its past history, so too has it a course of future growth given to it as a possibility belonging to the nature of things. The last phase in reference to the present is the superconscious. Now the superconscious of man, as explored and investigated by Indian traditional psychology and present yogic experience, seems to reveal the true character of the evolutionary process as a whole. The superconscious state is fundamentally a consciousness completely organised and harmonised and clearly proves to be a form and plane of consciousness distinct from that of the average human divided consciousness. This fact comes fittingly in the wake of human consciousness and therefore shows the end and goal toward which all conscious history seems to have tended. Thus we discover and become sure of the urge for wholeness as the most fundamental trend of evolution.

Now if the wide scope of our thesis and its general trend are clearly appreciated it will not be too difficult to see how it can reconcile the conflicting schools of contemporary psychology. While considering the general relation between consciousness and unconsciousness we have shown above how the unconscious is virtually the mechanising tendency of life. If that is true then we have reconciled the major conflict of our schools, viz., that of mechanism and teleology. To that we can add a fact of superconscious life. It has been observed that people through certain exercises of Hatha yoga involving an intensive discipline of attention and will are capable of stopping a physiological reflex like the heart-beat. As a phenomenon it is an interesting fact. But what is its value for a psychological theory? Does it not show that what is ordinarily mechanical and out of

the control of consciousness can be recovered to conscious guidance through a special cultivation of will? Evidently as mechanical action it must already be a subconsciously purposive action. If our argument is valid then the behaviourists may well now know the proper form and sphere of mechanical action which they have always extended too widely. There can thus be an understanding between the two principal warring schools of psychology.

It is interesting here to refer to two attempts recently made to find a way of reconciliation among the contemporary schools. Woodworth really does not attempt a synthesis. He is content to discuss each school by itself. However, he is not depressed by the conflicts and the so-called crisis of psychology and hopes that 'the-middle-of-the-roaders', the large body of independent psychologists, who are anxious to assimilate from each school, will develop the synthetic psychology of the future. But Levine, the author of *Current Psychologies* aims at a 'critical synthesis'. However, in place of a critical synthesis one finds the conclusion that "the boundaries that delineate each school have not been so rigid as to prevent the infiltration of principles fundamental to each. There are no closed systems". Regarding the conflict of mechanism and teleology his statement is more interesting. He writes, "Even Watson has brought in consciousness by the backdoor." Further he says, "The deeper we probe into the working of mechanism the less mechanical human behaviour appears. For a mechanism that performs prodigies of adaptation is to all intents and purposes an entelechy."

However, this reconciliation of mechanism and teleology is obviously different from ours. For us mechanism is a valued principle of action. But it is the operation of the unconscious, recoverable to conscious purposive guidance.

The Gestalt school will evidently receive our hearty endorsement regarding its perception of the *gestalt qualitat* and tendency to close up gaps as fundamental principles of psycho-physical behaviour. But it needs to recognise, from modern abnormal psychology, the psyche's relative independence of the body, so that the unvarying emphasis on psycho-physical parallelisms is modified. Freud, Jung and Adler can be heartily assimilated into the wide terms of our theory. The sex of Freud and the mastery motive of Adler are terms arising out of and belonging to the human psyche upto the plane of thinking consciousness. As soon as we are able to recognise the superconscious plane, the plane of aspiration or whole-willing, as different from that of egoistic desiring, we shall see a consciousness above conflict. To that harmonised consciousness the impulses of sex, like any other, and their repressions or diversions, are all relatively foreign. Therefore sex cannot be fundamental and final. The mastery motive too involves a situation of conflict and represents a divided state of will. The state of whole-willing and its proved reality alone can show the correct perspective of these motivations. It is in fact in the ignorance of that fact of

whole-willing that these, as some other opinions, continue to appear to us as final truths of human nature.

This is in broad indications the critical synthesis and reconciliation, which our theory is capable of offering on the much vexed question of the contemporary schools of psychology. Evidently it is impossible for us to go into greater details over this issue, even though it may mean a valuable substantiation of our thesis.

I am conscious of the length to which I have taxed the patience of my audience. But I would yet append a few words regarding the promise of Indian psychology. We have already seen that the standpoint of Indian psychology is all its own. Yoga is indeed an art. It aims at the achievement of a state or a form of consciousness. But that involves a standpoint which is, in the first instance, conscious of the goal, the evolutionally possible goal of human consciousness and then seeks to understand and interpret human consciousness in the light of that goal. The Gita presents a superb gem of psychological truth in its account of the desireless action possible when the *Dwandwas*, the dualities of experience, have been transcended and reconciled. This fact throws an illuminating light on the impulses and desires of the average life and without it we should be lost in the conflicts and anomalies of average mental life. The western psychology, even purposivist, turns to the past history for explaining the present. But in a system each part derives its meaning from the whole. In interpreting any stage of evolution we must attempt to consider possibly as large a part of the process as possible and not confine ourselves only to the course so far traversed without considering the full implications of the direction for the future it is tending to take.

This standpoint of Indian psychology and culture as a whole gave it the seeking and interest for the investigation and discovery of the superconscious states. These states and the methods of their achievement are as important to man as his destiny. They involve the knowledge and the means of the development of personality, of the realisation of wholeness in life. Evidently a psychological investigation and appraisal of these states is of immense value. We have shown above how the fact of psychic consciousness is a supreme psychological fact helping us to clarify many of our difficulties. That evidently involves the problem of transformation or conscious sublimation. The question is, how is a normal individual to raise himself above conflict to the status of whole living? The Indian literature of yoga as well as modern yogic experience contains a great deal on the subject, which we have yet to explore, investigate and appraise for the benefit of general psychology.

(Concluded)

INDRA SEN

NOLINI'S ATHLETICS

In the last two issues we published Nolini Kanta Gupta's reminiscences of his athletics. Now we present to our readers the observations, in two parts, made at close quarters by one to whom he has affectionately referred as his coach. One of the valuable features of the observations is the number of authentic facts and figures bearing on Nolini's achievements on the Sportsground.

I

THE utility of games and sports, especially in the spiritual life, has been brought home to us by the Divine Mother herself. 'By setting a personal example'... Had she not herself played Table Tennis, and then Tennis, had she not given a direct encouragement to us by her presence day after day for hours together during our Sports season and given each of us her smiling appreciation in every case, our physical cultures activities would not have attained the standard they now have. Seeing her taking part in physical activities, elderly Sadhakas like Nolini, Amrita, Pavitra, Purani, Anilbaran, the late Naren Das Gupta, the late Nolini Kanta Sen and others more or less of their age joined the marching exercises. At the bottom of our girls' enthusiasm for sports and games, and of their equality with the boys in some items, even of their superiority to them in certain events there lies the Mother's particular concern for physical perfection. There is no lack of foolish argument in our country against sports : "When did our ancient Yogis and Saints take part in sports ? If they had no such need why should the Yogis of to-day have?" The ancients were never without sports and amusements. The Rishi Jamadagni practised archery. It is on record that one day he was shooting arrows and his wife, Renuka Devi, helped in collecting and bringing them to him. The burning sun fatigued her so much that the Rishi fitted his arrow to the bow to hit the sun. Frightened, the sun-god came down and appeared before the Rishi and said that according to the divine dispensation his function was to give heat and light to the earth, but to save the lady from trouble he would present her with a pair of sandals and an umbrella. It is said that since then the umbrella and shoes have been in use. It is not only that the women helped their husbands and relatives in such sports; when necessary they themselves fought side by side with them. On the battlefield, when queen Vishpala, wife of king Khela, lost her thigh, the twin divine physicans Aswinikumaras, gave her an iron thigh, at the request of the king's priest, Agastya. Was this the beginning of "artificial limbs" ?

Even among the gods there was provision for happy competition. Suryā, daughter of Surya, was to select the most successful competitor for her husband. The terms of the competition were : whoever would be the first to reach the sun-world would win her hand. The Aswinikumaras won the race and the prize.

Our beloved Captain, Manoj (himself a champion in Athletics and an ace student of his time and an adept in histrionics, now a Professor at the Sri Aurobindo International Centre of Education) has most impressively dwelt at length on *Physical Education in Ancient India* in the April number of our *Bulletin of Physical Education*.

We now come to Nolini's athletics. The difference between an ordinary athlete and Nolini is that he took athletics as part of Sri Aurobindo's Integral Yoga. Even after stepping into his seventieth year he has made striking progress. This has been possible by his earnest personal effort and by the Grace of the Mother. He has proved that the main enemy of athletics is not age but lack of the sense of youthfulness.

In 1955, at sixty-six, despite his practice of Long Jump all round the year he got disqualified in all the three competitive jumps before the Mother. The three rounds of laughter from the spectators vanished in the air because Nolini remained the same unperturbed figure as he always is. He felt how such defeats affect younger nerves.

“Can an ever-happy being even in a distracted moment sense the feeling of the afflicted ?

How can one who has never been bitten by a venomous snake feel its tearing pain ?”

Here in the test of merit it is the bite of frustration. Here the Yogi had to pay the highest price of his *Karmayoga* (Yoga in Action)—*sama jaya parājayo* (equal in victory and defeat).

Just two years after, in his sixty-eighth year he won the first place in Long Jump, and thus reminded us of the great words of Sri Aurobindo in *Savitri* :

“His failure is not failure whom God leads.”

Or

“Man can accept his fate, he can refuse.”

If he could take the jump from the last point of limit, then he could easily exceed his 1957 record of 3m 85cm not by several inches but by two feet or more. For others of that age this would be an unimaginable feat.

Nervousness, though undesirable, is natural to us in the hour of competition. The goddess of sleep keeps her benign face away from us for even a week before that hour. That it is sheer weakness of our vital being is a little difficult to admit for sadhakas like us. Much to our surprise, Nolini has given us no chance to see him in jitters.

Our Amrita became a member of the Blue Group. Marching exercises he did—unexpected, unbelievable, quite contrary to his nature. But he left the Group a few years later. However, despite his being in a whirlwind of work he would be present on the Sportsground on the days of “his” Nolini’s athletic competition. One can easily predict that wherever Nolini is present, Amrita also is sure to be. Lakshmana knows, and so do we, that he has no equal in standing by Rama; Rama too feels in the heart of his heart :

*Deśe deśe kalatrāṇi deśe deśe ca bāndhavāḥ,
Tattu deśaṁ na paśyāmi yatra bhrātā sahodaraḥ.*

(Wives and friends can be found everywhere,
But at no place a brother of my own.)

On January 13, 1962, on Nolini’s birthday an inmate of the Ashram wanted to know from Amrita if his relations with Nolini were friendly or brotherly. Amrita kept silent for a while, taken aback. “He is my friend? You people may think so. But I always look upon him as my own elder brother.”

Two flowers on one stalk. Such joint lives dedicated to the Mother are an example to all the Ashram.

Now for an anecdote which looks but is not a cock-and-bull story.

One day Abinash Bhattacharya, a fellow-prisoner of our Sudhir (Captain Mona’s father) in the Andamans, was witnessing the Marching Exercises in the Ashram playground. The sight of Nolini’s running upset the gentleman. He said to Sudhir : “Sudhir, stop Nolini from running. God knows when he may make a scene by a fall. Is he not aware that he has long passed his youth? I tremble at the sight.” “Dada,” said Sudhir, “have you seen Nolini participating in the running and jumping competition?”

“Competition! at this age! If I were not an eye-witness here I would not believe it. Of course, everything is possible for a Yogi. If I were asked to give a jump, I would at a bound jump over to the next world. At any rate, I may pass the rest of my life in bed, limbs broken. Sudhir, you are laughing, but my heart skips a beat for Nolini.”

To come back to Nolini’s athletics. Though it may sound unbelievable, in 1954 at the age of 65, he breasted the tape in the 100 m sprint with his best timing of 14.9 s. He could have easily bettered it by 1 s had he been able to maintain his uniform speed from start to finish. Alas, the last twenty metres of the race did not fully surrender to his fleeting feet. Of course, ninety out of hundred suffer this fate. But never was Nolini compelled to cover the final 20 m with the speed of Slow Cycle Race as did the Pakistani sprinter, of course unwillingly, in the World Olympics held in London in 1948.

In 1954 Nolini came off not only first in the 100 m sprint but also third

in the 200 m. Time for the latter : 32.4 s. But one year later the athlete Nolini rose to his best timing (31.6 s.) in the 200 m. sprint.

A striking event. In 1958 while practising 200 m he dropped down after having covered 40 m and got hurt in two or three places. He stood up and said to his co-runner : "Who but I should fall ? I could not give the full measure of concentration that I should have had before the start." Here is the difference between him and ourselves. In such a case we blame our fate, whereas he who believes in self-effort blames his personal lapse. In a few seconds Gangaram, our genial Athletic Coach (himself a matchless athlete in his time) ran up to the spot and gave him first aid.

In 1955 Nolini took part in the most arduous of all the races, for it demands both speed and stamina—400 m. Time : 1.20.6 s. At the age of 66 to compete in a 400 m race is a matter of surprise not only for an Indian but for any athlete in the world.

Another surprise. Two years earlier he had chosen the most exacting and difficult of all the jumping events—Hop, Step and Jump. In this he won the third place beating his fellow-competitors of less than half his age.

1955—15.2 s

1956—15.3 s

1957—15.3 s

1958—15.4 s

1959—15.4 s

To keep up the same standard with negligible variation for five years successively, especially in a 100 m sprint, is unimaginable.

Here in the Ashram all work is part of our Sadhana. To look upon success and failure with an equal eye is our first essential. Victory or defeat made no difference to Nolini. A burning and lasting enthusiasm was he.

It is observed that indifference to results cannot make for the perfection of anything. To have enthusiasm for an action whose results are no concern for the doer is a very difficult matter.

"Thou hast a right to action, but only to action, never to its fruits."

On 29th May, 1953, it is doubtful if Hillary and Tenzing could have scaled Everest and planted on its summit the banner of victory had they literally followed this principle of the Gita.

In 1955 two elderly Sadhaks of the Ashram, participating in the Athletics competition, were on the track to show their worth to the Mother. They entertained no thought of victory or defeat, honour or dishonour. They had never been seen in field practice. They presented themselves on the fixed day at the fixed hour and at the fixed place for an 80 m race. The batch ahead of them ran off. Now was their turn. They took their positions with some

difficulty without the help of starting blocks. The stentorian orders of Pranab (Director of Physical Education) went forth one after another : "Get on your marks", "Set", "Go". Strange ! No sign of their start. Those near about asked, "Why the delay ?" Turning to his co-runner, one of the two said, "Let us then start." "You go first." "How can I ?" You are on my right. We have to run abreast in a line." During the everyday marching exercises they had heard Pranab say, "Keep in line by the right." How could it be otherwise here ? At last at the impatient shouts of the spectators, they got up, to the position of "attention". Then began, in full swing, their running race based on *niṣkāma-karma* principle. The two reached the finishing line together ; neither preceding the other. If one slowed down a bit, the other adjusted his speed accordingly, just to keep in line. Thus they came up to the Mother. This was the result of the so-called *niṣkāma-karma*. This is how our *niṣkāma-karma* gets reduced at times, to a lifeless and ridiculous affair. But in every action of Nolini one can find a full measure of his zest and enthusiasm. In sports his interest, earnestness and enthusiasm do not end in himself only, he shares his feelings with all.

Nolini participated also in Hammer and Shot-Put after regular and systematic practice. His Coach in Hammer was his beloved Rajen, ever-young, ever-zealous and ever friendly to all sportsmen. Disregarding pain here and there in his body Nolini carried on without a break his daily practice in these two items. Thoughtless fellows like us might read in this an ambition to win a high place. But the fact was : he was quite against pampering the pain by keeping to bed and persuading himself that he was helpless. His aim was to ignore and reject pain altogether from his body. Indeed, herein lies the secret of a true sportsman.

(To be continued)

CHINMOY

INDIA AND AMERICA

A DIALOGUE

INDIA : My young sister, little did you or the world know why out of an old colony you sprang up into being, a fresh, new nation. Time reveals its secret long, long after. Nature cares for the thing done, not its explanation.

AMERICA : By the way, the world has always much to learn from Nature. All solid work presupposes silent effort. The quest of Truth, above all.

INDIA : Because you understand this well, you are prospering and flourishing in so many directions.

AMERICA : Maybe. But what about the secret you have mentioned ?

INDIA : Every nation, like every man, has its own *raison d'être*. You have yours and you are gradually discovering it.

AMERICA : Different minds have different conceptions. Difficult to determine the correct one.

INDIA : Difficult, no doubt. Hence time reveals the correct thing, where we have not the Seer's insight for guidance.

AMERICA : You are the Mother of rishis, seers, sages, saints. You have the luck and the advantage of their insight, their fore-knowledge, their forewarning and correct guidance if you care to profit by them. You are expected to know your *raison d'être* best and act accordingly.

INDIA : You are right in your premises, right in your expectation too, but...

AMERICA : Oh, the times are perverted.

INDIA : Hence the consequences of the failings of a few at the top are visited upon the entire nation. Could Communist China, for instance, humiliate me if my own children in power had not already humiliated me by ignoring the Seer-voice of the one who is one with my soul ?

AMERICA : It's a well-known fact. The pity is that we learn from mistakes, most often from costly mistakes.

INDIA : That might apply to infants and infant nations. For an ancient nation with her acquired light and unrivalled culture, such follies are... Alas, it's a natural effect of the practical negation, that my present condition is, of my ancient self.

AMERICA : Well, sister, negations negate themselves in time. Don't they ?

INDIA : They do. Truths, side-tracked by mental choice, re-assert themselves by their own force. But only after the consequent disasters.

AMERICA : Obviously much of the avoidable could surely have been avoided if the timely warning had been taken. Of all countries in the world, you are the one to illustrate the infallibility of the Seer-vision compared to the intellectual. I believe, however, that your genius will rise to the occasion,

make up for the shortcomings and push ahead to your destined prosperity.

INDIA : Certainly, but with your continued help and good will, as now.

AMERICA : I unreservedly pledge you both.

INDIA : I know you too well to need a pledge. But how on earth could you believe in my "destined prosperity" ?

AMERICA : That's anyhow my intuitive feeling, now grown into a conviction. I firmly believe that your stabilised economy and growing prosperity will be the best bulwark against any inroad of false ideology on your sacred soil of the Truth.

INDIA : Such intuitive feeling and such clarity and quickness of perception are additional blessings to the freshness of your youth.

Moreover, the secret of your greatness lies in your receptivity to new ideals, your openness to truths from above the known regions of your science and, naturally, to your inherent and insatiable spirit of progress.

AMERICA : Who knows how long all these will endure, especially their basis which you finely define as 'the freshness of youth'.

INDIA : Do you believe in the eternity of the soul ?

AMERICA : I do.

INDIA : Then act up to your belief. Keep consciously linked up with your soul, practise living in it, at least as much as you live in your mind, and, be sure, you will have eternal youth, and its freshness will remain a perpetual fount of your mounting progress.

AMERICA : Possible perhaps to an individual or a group. But for a nation...

INDIA : Possible also for a nation. The world remains nowhere stuck up in its onward march. It is progressively growing into a new creation with new capacities...

AMERICA : You of the East are much too prone to high idealisms. Christ's millennium still remains a classic promise.

INDIA : Idealism is but a projection of a corresponding reality behind. Naturally, it makes for its own realisation. Now the realisation is nearing. Says my Seer-son :

"It comes at last, the day foreseen of old,
What John in Patmós saw, what Shelley dreamed,
Vision and vain imagination deemed,
The City of Delight, the Age of Gold."

The Divine Mother who presides over my destiny and of the world has heard 'the Hour of God' strike, the Hour ushering in the Age of Gold. She has also given the command to be ready for the great Hour.

AMERICA : You speak wonderful things. Man's hope of ages is nearing realisation so soon ?

INDIA .Without doubt.

AMERICA : But doubts do arise. How to believe ?

INDIA : Such things are not for the mind to believe but for the soul. Remember Christ : "We walk by faith, not by sight." And St. Augustine : "Faith is to believe what we do not see, and the reward of faith is to see what we believe."

You, my sister, are in the vanguard of the nations ranged against the forces of falsehood and darkness. If your vision is blurred by doubt, it will be a calamity for you and the world. Says my Seer-son one with the Divine :

"...The future lies with the men and nations who first see beyond both the glare and dusk the gods of the morning and prepare themselves to be fit instruments of the Power that is pressing towards the light of a greater ideal."

Well, my sister, if you could give me so much of your material aid on credit, why hesitate to take this statement of my Divine Son's infallible vision on credit too ? It is a question of trust which you can test in the very near future.

AMERICA : I admit that things above mental grasp are not arguable. If poets and thinkers can visualise things of the Beyond, the vision of a Seer-poet one with the Divine must be of infinitely greater weight and command unquestioned acceptance.

INDIA : I admire the breadth of your outlook. Your outlook, I know well, is naturally prospective. That is another secret of your progressive spirit. Says my Son again, "We do not belong to the past dawns but to the noons of the future." The greatness you have so far achieved is but basic. So is your independence. Like mine and other so-called 'free' nations'. Your fuller greatness waits on your fuller independence.

AMERICA : 'Fuller independence' in what sense ?

INDIA : In the supreme sense of the Spirit.

AMERICA : How ?

INDIA : Men make up nations. And if men are slaves of themselves ?...

AMERICA : True, but how is one to strike off this slavery ?

INDIA : That is India's part to show, not by theory so much as by example, and by a formative or transforming Force along with the example, but only on one condition—your cheerful consent and sincere co-operation.

AMERICA : Now perhaps I can trace the connection of these words with 'the Hour of God' you have referred to.

INDIA : Oh yes.

AMERICA : It's a question of great moment and of supreme interest. We are materially independent yet dependent on matter. The riddle has to be solved and true independence secured. Till then our independence is simply glorified nonsense.

INDIA : Not quite so, sister. A sound material base is the first pre-requisite for a supraphysical structure. Again, to be cooped up in matter alone is as [disastrous as to get altogether away from it into the Spirit. Now in 'the Hour

of God', His great new Force will dissolve all divisions—of Matter from Spirit, of man from man, of nation from nation—into the supreme fact of His integral oneness. This unseen fact of the indivisible oneness, now hiding behind this world of multiple diversity, will come to the front and be a patent and dynamic cohesive Force.

AMERICA : A sound philosophical ideal.

INDIA : The ideal of today is to be a concrete reality in the not-too-far-off tomorrow. Otherwise 'the Hour of God' would be a horrible Void.

AMERICA : I take you at your word. Nothing is impossible for the Omnipotent One. But what about 'the Hour of God' and 'His great New Force' ?

INDIA : The Omnipotent One has now chosen to manifest Himself through His all-creative Force in order to hasten the snail-pace progress in evolution and save the world from the menace of self-annihilation. This Force has now come down on earth and is powerfully active everywhere. It is the Force from far above the mind. That's why it is named the Supramental Force. From 1910 to 1950 my Divine Son spent almost a full half-century of concentrated *tapasyā* over its descent on earth ; and the Mother who is working with this Force has declared that 'the Hour of God', already envisaged by my Divine Son, is near and has given the signal to prepare for it.

AMERICA : Suppose you take up the work of world-liberation at once, do you expect the world will follow, or co-operate with you ? The world of the present, like Nature, or worse than Nature, is still red in tooth and claw, living in the menacing shadow of nuclear extinction.

INDIA : And so the world is yearning more and more for peace, safety and unity, is it not ?

AMERICA : Obviously.

INDIA : That is why, in response to this World-wide cry, the Lord has decided to come down and alter the very root of man's mutual menace.

AMERICA : By 'the very root' you mean human nature ?

INDIA : How quick and correct is your hit !

AMERICA : But how shall we prepare for His Hour ? The world's craving for peace has caused His descent, you mean ? Is that enough ?

INDIA : If the world intensifies its craving for peace and is determined to stake everything upon it and feels that no human power, however mighty and resourceful, can give it except the Divine Power, that will suffice to generate the proper atmosphere for a radical change to come about. Yet these are elementary conditions

AMERICA : The emancipation of men and nations from themselves is inconceivably more difficult than political or economic emancipation. What was so long a more or less individual concern has to be a mass-scale affair. The preparations, therefore, must be on an unprecedented scale and of a nature perhaps best known to you.

INDIA : Not quite known to me either. As it is an altogether new Force in the long history of mankind, we have no precedent to go by. But this much I can confidently say that if man's aspiration for change of nature becomes sincere and intense and he freely, unreservedly gives himself up to Him, puts himself in His hands, then He will take the whole burden upon Himself and His work will be easy, swift and effective.

AMERICA : Is self-giving to a cause so easy ?

INDIA : If not—and I admit it's no easy thing—then a will to change and a strong and unshakable faith in His Grace will suffice.

AMERICA : To this minimum man must rise.

INDIA : Your ready acceptance of this as the minimum bespeaks again your progressive spirit. Not for a paltry purpose was this gift divinely vouchsafed to you. It will now direct itself, I see clearly enough, to the highest ends of true emancipation of the world. You have so long saved the world from self-destruction by your tremendous scientific power as at least an adequate counterweight to the opposing forces and by your determined stand against them. The free world owes the continuity of its freedom to this power of yours and to your unflinching stand. You are building up its material base by an unstinted flow of your wealth. All this you have done and are doing, as your leading children say, in your own national interest, as an effective measure of your self-preservation. This is certainly true, but believe me, sister, this is not the whole truth. My clear conviction is that by serving your national interests, you have served and are serving also a high divine Purpose. You yourself will be conscious of it, as in 'the Hour of God', it unrolls itself to the human view.

If your progressive spirit is an instrument of action of the Divine Purpose, so is your wealth. Mind you, your wealth is as much His gift as your genius and your talents. As you have been so long the leading defensive force of the free world under the leadership of your mind, so, in the coming days, under the leadership of your soul, you will perhaps be the main instrument of His supreme purpose—the creation of a new world in the old, a world not governed and shaped, as hitherto, by powerful political blocs, their wills and diplomacies, but a world entirely governed by the Supreme's Will and Power. Herein lies hidden your *raison d'être* : in your whole-hearted participation in this gigantic divine work lies its consummation. Can you refuse this your high destiny ?

AMERICA : I couldn't and I wouldn't. And even if I would, the Lord wouldn't let me.

INDIA : In your voice rings His note of Victory. Let us join our hands, hearts and souls in His Service till the world-in-two with its endless little divisions and sub-divisions in each becomes an indissoluble one, and the One World becomes one with the One.

AMERICA : Amen.

TINKARI MITRA

CRESCENT MOON RANCH

SOMETIMES things happen when you least expect them. It happened like this. During my last week in San Francisco my good friend, Dr Chaudhuri, of the Cultural Integration Fellowship, inquired if I would like to spend a few days with friends in Arizona. It would include, he said, some speechmaking (nothing loath), some sightseeing (Grand Canyon included) and still leave me plenty of time to return to Columbia from where I was flying home. They had a branch at Sedona and the branch had expressed a desire....

"Thy will be done. Arizona, here I come," I told Dr Chaudhuri on the phone. A week later when the Astrojet dropped me at Phoenix airport the air outside felt warm, almost hot. But how clean and sharp ! The heavy topcoat which I carried like Sinbad the sailor was the only blot on the landscape and slowly breaking my back.

At the gate stood Mrs Duncan, smiling.

"— ?"

"Mrs Duncan, I presume ?"

No identification problem, you see. She was carrying a Tagore book in her right hand while I had flung a Kashmir shawl across my left. The ingenuity had paid off, on both sides.

At the end of a hundred-mile drive through deserts, mountains, the Yucca, the ubiquitous cacti and gleaming ghost towns we reached the little town of Sedona at nightfall. Dinner at the Turtle Restaurant, with mosaics and paintings by the Namajo Indians, was followed by a short hop home. It was dark and dusty when we drove up to the—Crescent Moon Ranch.

At the sight of it something within me stirred. Vague memories—of Tagore's book, the third eye of Shiva, the Rodeo and the wild West. But I was too tired—we had been talking non-stop, for the last two hours on all subjects under the sun and some even beyond, from the IBM to Immortality, in the latter of which both the Duncans and I solemnly believed—to figure out the mysteries of free association.

An entire cabin by the hillside had been left for my use. Cabin ? Yes sir, but no log cabin. The age of horse-and-buggy was over. Three small, elegant rooms, furnished with all utilities, gas, cooking range, refrigerator, bath, heating system, everything. Nothing could express more simply, beautifully and eloquently the work of the Cultural Integration Fellowship on the physical plane.

And there were books. Any number. Mostly on Indian culture and allied spiritual subjects. Ramana Maharshi, Sivananda, Vivekananda, Tagore, Gandhi, Radhakrishnan, Sri Aurobindo. I chose *The Secret Teaching of All Ages: An*

Encyclopaedic Outline of Masonic, Hermetic, Cabbalistic and Rosicrucian Symbolical Philosophy. The goddess of sleep must have smiled at my vanity. To be frank, I dozed off pretty early. When I woke up at midnight there was silence everywhere. And the book? The book was lying ignominiously on the floor, most of its secrets still intact. A gentle wind fanned my cheek while the stars sent their benediction from above. Nearby horses neighed and cowbells tinkled. It was a new but entirely satisfactory experience and I must have fallen asleep again almost immediately.

When next morning I woke up, refreshed, the sunlight pouring through the window was a blazing flood. Holy, holy, holy, it sang in my veins. It was too good to be missed and I did not like to miss it. The chirping of the birds was a reveille that could not be reasonably refused. I quickly dressed and went out.

What a view! If the Fellowship had been looking for a venue for an Ashram here it was.

On all sides stood the inscrutable hills, reminiscent, as Mrs Duncan had pointed out the previous evening, of the countryside round about Ajanta-Ellora, while the red earth could not help reminding me of Santiniketan. A creek, that had made sweet music for me all night, glided by. Not a house within hailing distance and no noise, none except that of the birds. I felt like an Adam of the morning and got back some of the innocence that life in sophisticated San Francisco had robbed me of.

But even Adam needed breakfast and I presented myself duly at the Duncan's retreat at eight o'clock. The house, on the ledge of a raised plot, overlooked the creek. The garden had a Japanese touch, with its stones and lights on the ground, while the interior was perhaps more Indian than most Indian homes today.

After breakfast Mr Duncan, a man of few words but always sensible, left for work. Mrs Duncan kindly took me round the ranch, a working ranch, as she told me, with some cattle, a pear and an apple ranch. A modern Ashram, shall we say? As we stepped across the dusty, pebbly road the amazed cows and horses looked for a moment at the intruders in their pasture before returning to their accustomed activity. What struck me most about the place was the peace, the peace everywhere. It was such a contrast to the image of America and my own life in San Francisco during the last few months. To look at the young lambs across the country green, the creek flowing through the red hills, a waterfall, the blaze of daffodils, and the whiff of meadow-sweet, the sunlight that coiled content on the white branches of the sycamore tree,—it somehow reconciled you with reality.

Where is the refuge swept with cleansing air
To soothe the anguish of the muddled mind
So twisted on itself?...O mind, be like a tree!

How right the ancients had been in choosing inaccessible mountain heights and lonely streams, away from the madding crowd ! Here sang peace, peace in the air, peace in the grass, peace in the trees, and peace in the heart of one man. I must have become a little absent-minded. Mrs Duncan's gentle voice brought me back to actuality. She was speaking about the Ashram there and how it had begun, what difficulties and prejudices had to be fought against and how, slowly, the idea was gaining ground. It was fascinating, being with and listening to this friendly, sensitive spirit, who knew and loved India so well. It was a lesson in hope and humility, being with her, a *tapasvini* from the West. Frankly, there was neither East nor West, only the Centre.

Later in the day, when I had a chance, I asked her a few questions which she readily answered.

"How long have you been interested in India and the spiritual life ?" I asked her.

"Well," she spoke slowly in a soft voice, "I think I have been interested in the spiritual life always, even as a child. My first contact with India was, I believe, through the writings of Tagore and Dhangopal Mukherji, both of whom I later came to know and admire so much. I felt a ready response when I read them. Then, in 1930, when I was going through a trying time, seeking, you may say desperately seeking," she added with a smile, "one day my father told me about Shri Keskar, who was then in the Roerich Museum, New York. I went to his classes and was thrilled. He taught the *Bhagavad Gita*, the *Sutras* of Patanjali and the Bible. He was a very holy man and had no dogmatism, a person who emanated the light. At this time I began having some inner experiences, little ones, quickened, no doubt, by contact with him."

"How did you come across Tagore and Sri Aurobindo ?"

"I met Tagore in Florence in 1931 or so. I had been already interested in Indian religion and philosophy and he had asked me to visit India. But my children were then quite young. However, I went, in 1934, alone. The first part of my stay I spent with the venerable and dear soul, Sri Keskar, in the small town of Ratnagiri. It was such a small town really. You could not even buy postcards. But I believe I absorbed more of India that way, living there, than in any other. And, oh, Divali, I shall never forget that. With him I later went to Bombay and from there to Ajanta-Ellora. And then, there were no planes in those days, by train to Calcutta. There I met my old friend, Saumya Tagore. Later I went down to Santiniketan, for a short but memorable visit. How is it now ? But I was ill part of the time and had to go to Kashmir for a change, stopping, briefly, at Banaras."

"And Sri Aurobindo ?"

"It's strange, but it was Saumya, the radical revolutionary, who directed me to him. He of course knew of my spiritual interests. Did you know what a great teaser he could be ? He used to call me the Mystery Mouse. I've forgotten

what I called him. The Bengal Tiger, I suppose. But it was he who gave me *The Riddle of This World*. That was the beginning, you might say. On return I read Sri Aurobindo's *Essays on the Gita*. And more later. It's an ocean, you know."

"How did the 'ocean' affect you?"

"You see I was seeking for spiritual light and answers. I had found answers, here and there, at different places. But I never found so many, at one place, as in Sri Aurobindo. He also seemed to me a bridge between the past and the present, between the East and the West too. Some of the Oriental writings did not mean much to me, maybe due to my Western conditioning. Asceticism, for instance, has never appealed to me. Sri Aurobindo's approach and attitude seemed to make sense to me. For instance, his idea that all life is yoga. Also, that the truth is within."

"You know Browning said the same thing about truth."

"Really?"

"Here it is," I said, trying to remember the lines as best I could.

"Truth is within ourselves; it takes no rise
From outward things, whate'er you may believe.
There is an inmost centre in us all,
Where truth abides in fullness; and around
Wall upon wall, the gross flesh hems it in,
This perfect, clear perception—which is truth.
A baffling and perverting carnal mesh
Binds it, and makes all error; and to know
Rather consists in opening out a way
Whence the imprisoned splendour may escape,
Than in effecting entry for a light
Supposed to be without."

"That's it," she said.

"But how did the Ashram idea come about?" I inquired.

"You know," she said, looking at the hills beyond, "the dream of an Ashram was not clear for a long time. It seemed to come to focus after we acquired this property and after, I should add, meeting Dr. Chaudhuri. He himself was then in a difficult situation, didn't quite know whether to stay here or to go back to India. We offered him the use of this place. For his own work he, however, preferred to stay in San Francisco. But from time to time he would come down and talk to small groups. There, by the creek," she pointed with a wave of her hand. "One day, speaking of other things, he talked of this place as a perfect setting for an Ashram. That was the seed-idea, so to

speak. But he believed in going slow. Then when we were in India again we had an interview with the Mother. She said, 'Now the work will begin.' That's all."

"What are your main activities now and what changes or developments do you foresee in the future?"

"Main activities? Well, I should say the gathering of the group twice a month, when we have readings and discussions. Then there is the book-lending section, that is the library. And facilities for people who are interested to come down and bide for a while, for rest, reading and meditation. Occasionally we invite people, even from India. Purani was here."

"What else?"

"You see our interest is in yoga, union or unity. My own interest for years and years has been to unite the East and the West, first, of course, in myself and then in whatever...you know, wherever possible. One can only try. Really the work is not ours. If we can make ourselves into instruments, that will be enough. About changes and developments, I would say that the dream of the Ashram is slowly unfolding, materialising will be too big a word. I have hesitated to call it the Moon Ranch Centre, but more and more it is coming to be called like that. Do you think it is all right?"

"That's just about right, I should say."

"We are building, or preparing slowly. You see the facilities now are few and far between. But we are soon going to have another well, this will supply water to the new buildings that we hope to set up soon. But," she added after a pause, "my own feeling has always been that an Ashram gathers round some holy man or great soul. We don't have one, unless it be the great spirit of Sri Aurobindo. Purani said, he is here. Perhaps one day other souls will come too. At any rate, the current of exchange between this place and Pondicherry, which is the focal point, is there. By this we do not mean or imply any exclusive set or caste or creed. As I have said, our ideal is the ideal of unity and that means the presence of diversity and the presence of a great soul, one who unites all this diversity. Perhaps more than one soul. If it is destined, if it is the will of the Divine that it should be so, it will be done one day. What do you say?"

"I feel it will be done. It is already under way."

"You really feel so?" asked Mrs. Duncan rather anxiously.

"Indeed, I do. Mrs. Duncan, I am now going to ask you something rather dreadful. Supposing, at gunpoint, shall we say, someone were to ask you about your credo or faith, what would you say?"

"Gunpoint?" she raised her eyes in alarm.

"That was a metaphor, misplaced," I readily assuaged her.

"Well, I believe (here the voice fell very low, it was as if she was speaking to herself) in the Light within, within myself, within all of us, within Nature,

within everything. And I also believe in the Being and Becoming and that we are that Being in Process, unveiling the Truth inherent in all of us. But are *we* unveiling the Truth or is It unveiling Itself ? I think It is." Stopping for a second she continued, "And of course I have tried to see the One in myself and in all. But," she added with an unfeigned smile that had a lot of sunshine in it, "I also forget it a good deal of time."

She was in excellent company, I assured her, at which the smile only broadened a bit.

"Another question, Mrs. Duncan. You know many people, including Indians, say that India is a spiritual country. Do you really feel so ?"

"I do," she said without a moment's hesitation. "The great thing in India is the spiritual undercurrent. You feel it all the time, provided one is a seeker himself. I felt it strongly while I was there. India is the pearl of great price. Through the rise and fall of nations she has been faithful to the spiritual idea, more than most countries and cultures. That is a fact."

"You once said that in America there are no holy men. Would you care to explain ?"

"I should qualify that by saying that if they are there, I haven't met them so far. By holy men I of course mean illumined souls. I have met many fine souls here, but that is not the same thing. It is a great blessing, believe me, to be able to sit at the feet of someone who has realised the Truth, the Self. One hungers for it, one yearns for it."

"Mrs. Duncan, it is almost needless to ask you this, but do you believe in the ideal of human unity ?"

"Oh, yes," was all that she said. Was there need for more ?

"One last question. Your first Indian teacher called you 'Lila', which is our word for 'world-play'. Are you happy to be part of it ?"

"Yes, indeed," but the smile soon turned pensive. But then again the smile came back as soon as it had disappeared. "You know I liked the reaction that this word always brought in India every time it was mentioned. Everyone smiled." (No wonder. So did I.)

"Did you know Margaret Wilson ?" it was now her turn to ask.

"No, I did not." But I told her that I had heard of that gentle devoted daughter of President Wilson who had spent her last days in Pondicherry, at the Ashram.

"We were old friends. May I show you a letter she wrote to me ? I think you will like it," and she brought me a somewhat faded script. It read : "This is to send you loving Christmas greetings and a prayer for the birth of the Christ-child in us. Birth is never easy, is it ?—therefore the straining at the bonds, the groaning efforts which we think we are making, when it is really nature in us straining to give birth to the Divine Child hidden in her Heart. Perhaps we should be glad for the pain because then we know that the

birth has indeed begun. In fact I think that I should be anxious if there were no pain for fear that I was mistaken and the birth was not near. There seems to be no escape ! Here in this place where everything is made as easy as possible we groan and travail just the same. But, oh Lois, to be able to gaze upon two in whom the Self has been born is the greatest reassurance I have known." It was a letter that ennobled one even to read; its very pain was but the passion for perfection, for the new birth.

But how recount the experiences, the winged days ? It seemed a luminous hand guided the turn of every event. The "children" were gathering, there was no doubt about that. The simple miracle was obvious every moment of the four days I spent at the Crescent Moon Ranch. It is really hard to say how the days passed, in the bliss of solitude no less than in that of the most meaningful of companionships. Even the Grand Canyon loomed less large than this growing awareness of the One World in many hearts. It seemed all so simple and inevitable—the many friendly contacts, in the valleys, on hilltops, amidst the fragrant pine forests, at downtown stores, with lonely artists lost in their dreams, young couples who read *Savitri* together, in schools bright with the laughter of children and strange music in the mesa, Hallelujah in the howling desert.

When finally Mr and Mrs Duncan waved me farewell with our agreed formula of "To be continued" (substitute for 'Goodbye') Crescent Moon Ranch was soon lost behind the silent hills. The Crescent Moon, I suddenly remembered, was the symbol of new beginnings, the new birth. Looking at the full moon up above I knew the symbol was also a fact. Our parting was an illusion. The hour of the Great Birth had come. Kipling was dead as the dodo. On the shores of supermanhood the children of the future played the game of games.

SISIRKUMAR GHOSE

A LETTER FROM AMERICA

(To A. B. PURANI)

Berkeley 7, California
July 8, 1963

JUST one year ago and you were here. And it seems but yesterday. I am longing to see you and come to the Ashram next spring. I hope I can get on an ocean liner and cross the seas and stay there as long as possible. There is nowhere in all the world where I would rather be, nor anywhere where I could be nearer the spirit and the shrine of Sri Aurobindo. . . Mr. T kindly gave me *The Synthesis of Yoga* before I left the Crescent Moon last summer. I can never read Sri Aurobindo but what I feel that he is true altogether; that I am brought back to the soul waiting within me. What trust, what rest comes to me in the long and endless passages! Even the weight of his greatness sustains us as the waters of the ocean uphold the swimmer if he yields and balances in them.

Some day I hope recordings will be made with magnificent voices, reading the passages from careful selections. Also recording of exposition which you could do so wonderfully.

But nothing will ever take the place of the direct intimate communion of his words and his spirit in the silence of the mind and the heart within one. There, I feel, one finds as much as can be revealed to one through intuition and meditation in the slow personal absorption that is entirely within one.

Sri Aurobindo has that rare gift of distilling meaning from the infinite to the finite; of awakening the soul that slumbers in us gently and almost imperceptibly. He unfolds in one or one unfolds in him—I cannot tell which. This mysterious power fills us with its life-giving essence far beyond the intellect which ceases to define and exhaust him once it is confronted with a mind of such magnitude and a consciousness of such dimensions. Many humble folks like me approach him in an intuitive and subjective attitude and receive whatever of Truth comes to one. What one perceives, that one understands; that much becomes vital to one....

IDA M. ROPER

WHEREFROM

WHEREFROM steals, O Love, Thy footstep's wonder-fall?
Art Thou the One Beloved Gaze
That from the rapt whitenesses of the All
Follows my tread through the sombre maze
To beg for a kiss?

Was it Thou in the lucent hush
Where only God-winged smiles can fly,
Waiting for the Old to die, Earth to re-blush,
For my New Birth's sweet song and cry
And the Holy Fire's loving hiss?

Or hast Thou been ever the sigh of that rose,
The red longing and beauty carved
Into a sudden bloom of Grace that clasped me close
When my heart sobbed and starved
Without Thy bliss?

JANINA

FRENZY OF WORK

RECKLESS you run in a swelled frenzy of work,
To build castles of cloud you spend your prime—
Only to multiply your grief and grime.
For ego-ends you plan many a lurk
Whose bitter consequence you seek to burk,
Yet hope the chink of your false coin shall chime
With the all-overriding scheme of Time:
There is no end to this selfward-turning arc.

Straighten your crooked and biased tape-measure's end
And judge your deeds by the Infinite's yard-stick;
All shall fall over-worn like the serpent-skin
Or prove a sham like a juggler's clever rope-trick
Unless willed by the All and the soul within—
Your mind and body's worship of the Beyond.

HAR KRISHAN SINGH

A SUPERNAL CALL

ALL night long the incense burnt,
Air breathes through the fields of dream,
Meditating silence fills the hush of night.
Under the brooding sky a voice is heard
From the soundless depth of Soul—
A prayer, a silent utterance reveals
Like the opening door of a temple
The inner altar of unforeseen deity.

The mud of flesh feels a transfiguring touch,
Like the joy of a blinded son
Who sees not, yet sees, the smiling face of his mother.
Life's wounded happiness with fleeting fate
Drifts like the changing hue of dusk.

A crowned Loneliness in the ocean of Grace
Submerged the broken bridge of mortality
Flung open into the unending vast.
A call vibrates in the ethereal gleam.

AMALESH BHATTACHARYA.

EROICA

(1)

Mother Divine,
I hear an urgent call, reveille at Dawn,
A message for Thy children, drums and cymbals,
An order of the day to each soldier on the front,
Summons to courage and decision, great jubilation,
A familiar voice, silver laughter and ringing bells,
Soft footfall of the approaching New Creation.

(2)

“O Pioneer of the Gnostic evolution,
Prophetic dreams, hopes and promises
Fulfil. Herald God’s reign. Millenniums await thy advent.
Carry out my will, cleave new broadways to divine Ecstasy
Through ravines, fields and mountains. Shape Paradise on Nature’s soil.
Die, O Seeker bound to ego, enamoured of vanity, thy star has set.
Forget the charming frailties, burn in the blaze of the New Sun rising,
And be the twice-born, awake to the Reality, the knower of the Brahman.
Assert thy birthright, accomplish thy mission.
Live for me, by me and in me from now on.
Open wide thy spirit to the incoming Light.
Be my instrument, bright and transparent,
Moved by the Truth above
Beyond the dubious circle of reasoning.
I shall embrace the world with thy eyes,
Pour my love on it through thy heart divinised
And from the capital of thy soul convince it
Of lasting peace and harmony, sheer joy of living in the Spirit.
O Mortal, welcome the Eternal in thy frame of body, life and mind.
The Lord has set His saving seal on thy Destiny.
Arise, demand and receive in this supreme Hour of Grace.”

(3)

O Sweet Mother, make me, break me, do as Thou wilt.
 My whole being lies prostrate at Thy feet.
 Deepen our vision of the one Divine, awaken the sleeping Psyche.
 Widen the orbit of our flight in the new dimensions of understanding.
 Change our faltering steps
 Into spontaneous movements of faith.
 Replace our groping and search in a blind alley
 With the unhindered vista of revealing sight,
 In our sleep, our waking and when the moon is on the wane.
 Remould us in Thy truth-vision of the Real,
 O Sculptress of perfection and God's design.
 O veiled Bride of Eternity, effulgent Beauty,
 • Were it only for an instant unveil Thy mystic Face
 And lead the soul across the perilous line
 Beyond which all is Supreme Felicity.
 Preside, ancient Priestess, at the altar of life
 And carry to the Master of Sacrifice,
 Our humble offering, a chalice of Gratitude
 Filled with the yearning for Oneness,
 Right to live and love under a golden sky.

•
 August 15, 1963

NIRANJAN

MY MARVELLOUS MOTHER

This is the translation of a Bengali poem, "Arūpā Mā Āmār", by a front-rank litterateur who has enriched the culture of Bengal by writing more than two hundred books. He was devoted to the Mother and Sri Aurobindo. For the last two decades of his life, until his death on July 23 1963, his all-absorbing study was Sri Aurobindo's "Savitri". His writings on Sri Aurobindo were not a few, and all of them were inspiring. The following poem and another which we shall publish in the next issue seem to be his last tributes to the Mother.

MARVELLOUS...

my Mother marvellous.
That is what matters about me,
that and nothing else,
that this frail death-bound body should carry
Her blessings,
the blessings of Immortality.
That is why
crossing a hundred deaths
these arms stretch towards the life everlasting.

Bird in a cage
the music of the spheres I sing,
O gift of Mother mine.

Strewn with thorns my path,
feet bound in chains...
yet a Pilgrim on the march am I!
Seated in the dust—
with the stars do I hold my rendezvous,
such is my Mother's Will!

Weak flame of a little lamp,
it blows out again and again,
but then how it blazes up too, again and
yet again!
O the alchemy of Mother mine!

Wherever I turn
 beauty unending startles my eyes...
 in specks of dust I see the Taj,
 in dewdrops are written
 the Vedas and the Upanishads,
 in leaves and creepers whisper the holy hymns
 in every eye the fire of sacrifice,
 in all sounds a prayer, an incantation,
 the murmur of the Mother's name I hear
 everywhere. . . .

Marvellous all that I behold—
 marvellous each sunrise !
 the life of a single day
 carries treasures of immense, endless surprise !

Marvellous
 the flowers that bloom,
 the flowers that fade,
 each to the other linked.
 The flowers that bloom
 and the flowers that fade
 all,
 at my Mother's feet
 fall.

All fragrance, all fulfilment
 rest there—
 at
 Her
 feet.

NRIPENDRAKRISHNA CHATTOPADHYAYA

(Translated by Sisirkumar Ghosh from the original Bengali.)

UNFAMILIAR INDIA—III

WHO first declared that the sun which appears to travel across the sky from east to west is really stationary ? Most people, of course, would remember the phrase : “the Copernican revolution.” Indeed, it was the Polish Copernicus who in 1530 wrote the book which started astronomy on its modern scientific career. But some may remember Aristarchus of Samos, about 250 B.C., who held the heliocentric theory that the sun remains still while the earth and the other planets revolve about it. Hardly anyone knows the passage on the sun in the *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa* (III.4.6.) which goes much beyond even the time of Buddha :

sa vā eṣa na kadācanā 'stam eti no 'deti. . . .

Here we have the first clear statement that the sun actually does not “rise” or “set”.

*
**

Another aspect of “Unfamiliar India” emerges in relation not to the sun but to the portion of earth on which Indians lived. And now it is not intuitive scientific insight but a most delicate-deep sense of the national being.

“The western half of the Ganges plain, from the region around Delhi to Patnā, and including the *Doāb*, or the land between the Ganges and its great tributary river Jamnā, has always been the heart of India. Here, in the region once known as *Āryāvarta*, the land of the Aryans, her classical culture was formed.”¹

Yes, literally this heart of India is “the land of the Aryans”, but to that heart itself it has a more suggestive definition. It is defined “as the land where the black antelope finds its natural habitat”. The black antelope symbolises beauty, innocence, energy—the qualities of the soul living from its natural feeling of the Divine. By its presence it shows that here is where the saint and the yogi and the avatar are at home. How deeply ingrained the religious vision as well as the poetic imagination was in India’s makers and shapers may be judged from the fact that even a hard-headed lawgiver like Yajnavalkya expresses his appreciation of *Āryāvarta* by saying : “That country is fit for the religious life where the antelope is black.”

Next to the roaming black buck, the growth of Kusa grass is regarded as distinguishing this holy land. The third requisite is *Yagna*, the institution of sacrifice, the feeding of the flame that is the messenger between men and the gods. Next comes *Dharma*, the code of the moral life. And last is the social order of the four castes and the four ashramas or stages of human existence.

*
**

¹ *The Wonder that was India* (New York, 1954), p 2.

Many things which we consider part and parcel of India belong really to the surface mind or some late development of the surface life. A South Indian writer has spoken nostalgically of the odour of coconut oil from the Indian kitchen. And most Indians are under the impression that the use of this oil is an ancient practice of their land to keep the hair beautiful and the head cool. But the fact is that the greatest ages of our country, both spiritual and secular, knew nothing of it and never used it either as food-aid or as beauty-aid. A. L. Basham,¹ an authority on India, writes : "The coconut was a comparatively late importation from South-East Asia and is not mentioned in early sources, though it was known in the Middle Ages."

According to the ancient Buddhist Vinaya texts, "hair was besmeared with pomade or hair-oil of bees-wax".² Even so late a writer as Kalidasa has no reference to coconut oil. Bhagawat Saran Upadhyaya, in the article "Economic Wealth and Prosperity Depicted by Kalidasa",³ tells us : "Several oils were used. The oil of Ingudi was used for the head as well as for the purposes of burning lamps."

*
**

What sort of hair did historical India favour ? Jet black seems to have been the favourite colour. Dandin,⁴ one of the chief writers of prose narrative in the Medieval Age, pays the highest compliment to a woman's hair by saying : "Her abundant hair is not brown, even at the tips, but long, smooth, glossy and fragrant." Basham⁵ comments in a footnote : "Though a fair complexion was much prized in ancient India a trace of brownness in the hair, fairly common in the North, was thought very unbeautiful and inauspicious."

But here a curious point may be mentioned. Not only brown but even blonde hair was known in India and in a special case highly prized. The grammarian Patanjali declared blonde hair to be one of the essential qualities in a Brahmana ! In his *Mahābhāṣya* on Panini II, 2, 6, he informs us :

*gaurāḥ śucyācārah kapilāḥ piṅgalakeśa ity-enān-āpi abhyantarān
brahmanyē guṇa kurvanti.*

Compiled by K. D. SETHNA

¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 193-194.

² *The Age of Imperial Unity* (Bombay, 1951), p. 575.

³ *Indian Culture*, Vol. VI, p. 318.

⁴ Basham, *Op. cit.*, p. 444.

⁵ *Ibid.*

Students' Section

THE DESCENT OF THE BLUE

A Drama

ACT 10

SCENE 5

(Pondicherry. Aurobindo's house. The Mother looking up the "Arya" accounts, etc. Amrita comes in with a heap of the morning mail. Placing it on Aurobindo's table, he lingers.)

AUROBINDO *(looking at Amrita)* : Yes, Amrita ?

(Amrita had the standing instructions of Aurobindo that he should remind him of the matter for the "Arya" a week before the day fixed for going to press.)

AMRITA : Matter for the "Arya," please. Just seven days left.

AUROBINDO : Oh yes. Thank you. I'll set about it forthwith.

AMRITA : But once you sit down at your desk you will forget everything else and go on till you finish. Why not dispose of the post first ?

AUROBINDO : Very well. You are always business-like. That's all to the good.

(Running his eyes through the letters, one by one, he writes marginal notes, and stops short at one.)

Here's a reader of the "Arya" asking me how I, a literary man and a politician, could become all on a sudden an out-and-out philosopher! It has struck him rightly. I must write to him that I knew precious little about philosophy before I did the yoga and came to Pondicherry. How did I manage to do it and why ? Because X proposed to me to co-operate in a philosophical review—and my theory was that a yogi ought to be able to turn his hand to anything. . .

AMRITA : But it has never struck me as strange. Your articles, even your speeches, were at no time unmixed politics or pure literature. They have always been a happy blend of all the three, each at its best—I mean, politics, literature and philosophy, although the fire of love of country and her freedom predominated.

AUROBINDO : But hasn't the "Arya" a different complexion altogether ?

AMRITA : Undoubtedly.

AUROBINDO : Then you concede that he is justified in asking me. . . .

AMRITA : I do. Oh that the man in question could see you filling page after page without halting anywhere, as if your very fingers were inspired !

AUROBINDO : But that is exactly the truth ! Strange to say, a Power comes directly into the fingers, as if it did not have to pass through anything else ! Just now I said that a Yogi should be able to turn his hand to anything. Well, the word "hand" can be applied in a very literal sense where the "Arya"-articles are concerned. . . .

Now take these letters and make up replies from my marginal notes. Let me now start work.

SCENE 6

(Residence of the Tagores, Calcutta. Seated Dwijendranath, the eldest brother of Rabindranath, in his study. He sends for his personal secretary, Anilkumar Mitra.)

(Enter Anil)

DWIJENDRANATH : Have you received the latest issue of the "Arya" ?

ANIL : Yes, Sir. It has just come. I am bringing it. Anything else ?

DWIJENDRANATH : Do you read it as regularly as I ?

ANIL : No, Sir. I tried for a time but found it brain-racking, too high, too deep for my intellect.

DWIJENDRANATH : Ah, my friend, that's a wrong approach. It's no intellectual pabulum. It's for the soul. From my study of the whole range of philosophy, Eastern and Western, I can freely declare that what Aurobindo Ghosh says in his articles has never been said by anybody else anywhere. *(After a pause)* Go deeper than your intellect when you read the "Arya" next and you'll find it clearer.

SCENE 7

(1918. A. B. Purani's first visit to Aurobindo. No. 41 Rue François Martin, the "Arya" Office.)

AUROBINDO : How are you getting on with your Sadhana ?

¹PURANI : “. . . It is difficult to concentrate on it so long as India is not free.

AUROBINDO : Perhaps it may not be necessary to resort to revolutionary activity to free India.

PURANI (*all surprise*) : But without that how is the British Government to go from India ?

AUROBINDO : That is another question ; but if India can be free without revolutionary activity, why should you execute the plan ? It is better to concentrate on yoga—the spiritual practice. . . . Suppose an assurance is given to you that India will be free ?

PURANI (*knowing fully well that Aurobindo alone can assure him*) : Who can give such an assurance ?

AUROBINDO : Suppose I give you the assurance ?

PURANI : If you give the assurance, then I can accept it.

AUROBINDO : Then I give you the assurance that India will be free.

PURANI (*apologetically*) : Are you quite sure that India will be free ?

AUROBINDO : You can take it from me, it is as certain as the rising of the sun tomorrow. The decree has already gone forth. . . .”

(*Being fully convinced of India's freedom Purani bows down to Aurobindo and takes leave of him.*)

SCENE 8

(*Calcutta. Barin receives a letter in Bengali from Aurobindo, dated 7th April 1920, after his release from the Andamans. His joy knows no bounds.*)

BARIN (*reading aloud*): “First about your Yoga. You wish to give me the charge of your Yoga, and I am willing to take it, that is to say, to give it to Him who is moving by his divine Shakti both you and myself whether secretly or openly. But you must know the necessary result will be that you will have to follow that special way which He has given to me and which I call the Integral Yoga.”

(*Barin looks into the distance...*)

Rest assured, I will do my utmost to follow your directions.

(*He continues reading.*)

“After these fifteen years I am only now rising into the lowest of the three levels of the Supermind and trying to draw up into it all the lower activities,

¹ Taken from A. B. Purani's *Evening Talks*,

But when this Siddhi will be complete then I am absolutely certain that God will through me give Siddhi of the Supermind to others with less difficulty.”

(His face lights up.)

Your words open a vast world of undreamt-of possibilities for us. Your Supramental Siddhi will be a land-mark in the history of human evolution. And you will put India in the centre of the world-map for all future.

(He continues reading.)

“I do not want hundreds of thousands of disciples. It will be enough if I can get a hundred complete men, empty of petty egoism, who will be instruments of God.”

(With a sigh—and then a smile:)

Ah, here is the snag. Well, Sejda, have you ever moved back even by a single step from any difficulty in life ? You who have already achieved the impossible, will it not be within your power to turn crude matter like us into your “complete” men? So long as we have you as our Head, we have no fear. Your work must triumph.

(To be continued)

CHINMOY

T. S. ELIOT

(Continued from August)

THE WASTE LAND

(Concluded)

III

THE FIRE SERMON

As far as the technique of the opening of "The Fire Sermon" is concerned, it starts with Free Verse in pastoral style—adopting a direct link with Spenser's "Prothalamion" and "Epithalamion"—Bridal Hymns—in the fourth line, the refrain :

Sweet Themmes runne softly till I end my song.

Against the background of this opening the poet flings the sordid images of the other aspect of the river—those images which reflect *the unconscious attitude to life and beauty and nature* of all the ordinary lives which make up the mass of the population of a big city—a city throbbing with 'life'—with the possible awareness of *a million lives who are not aware* (for if they were would they strew the river with the rubbish of their up-to-date civilisation ?)

With the transition of the line from Verlaine's "Parsifal" :

Et O ces voix d'enfants, chantant dans la coupole !

comes the nightingale's interruption. Free Verse changes into regular rhythm—but it is the rhythm of the modern world of taxis and typewriters, telephones and food in tins,—where man seeks his satisfaction in the sordid pleasures of the senses, which at their height bring only fatigue and boredom—and "... a welcome of indifference."

(And I Tiresias have foresuffered all
Enacted on this same divan or bed;

I who have sat by Thebes below the wall
And walked among the lowest of the dead.)

In such lives are contained the Past, Present and Future—lost on the ebb and flow of the waters; caught up by the song of the river, the song of its immortal cry—Song of the three daughters of the Thames. (*cf.* “Rhine Daughters”). Burning, burning, burning—we are reminded of the words of the Buddha in his Fire Sermon : “All things, O priests, are on fire” (*cf.* the Fire of Heraclitus); and of St Augustine—“. . . where a cauldron of unholy loves ang about my ears”—“O Lord Thou pluckest me out”—“but I leave the world of men”—burning.

IV

DEATH BY WATER

The fourth poem of “The Waste Land” is intended to make us stop and think. We have seen the ‘seed’ planted in “The Burial of the Dead” ; we have seen the ‘seed’ grow in “The Game of Chess” and “The Fire Sermon” ; now we are brought face to face with the Scythe or the Sickle—the reapers of the ‘harvest’.

The shortness of this poem has its own effect—it brings us to the edge of the river Styx, where the traveller of consciousness is urged to pause, look and meditate—beyond *the profit and loss* of life, beyond the fact that one *was once handsome and tall as*—other men.

Phlebas, the Phoenician sailor, is the symbol associated with the *Hanged God* of Frazer—the Incarnate Divine—The Avatar—The Christ.

As he rose and fell
He passed the stages of his age and youth
Entering the whirlpool.

His drowning, against which Madame Sosostris has warned him, is the recapturing the image of *the sacrificial god* descending into the waters of the ‘known’ Inconscient, to sow once again the ‘seed’ of New Birth.

The last lines counsel all—“Gentile or Jew”—to renounce that sole pre-occupation with the traffic in worldly things, the lusts of the flesh which sunder man from Love and Life and the true heritage of his mortal existence. And “O you who turn the wheel” means “you who steer the ship of the nations, you leaders of the people and heads of governments, consider—He, who walked this earth and died for you.”

V

WHAT THE THUNDER SAID

The fifth poem of "The Waste Land" not only summarises the images of the four that have preceded it, but sets out to raise the poetry to a more universal level by introducing—in the beginning a Christian image of the Crucifixion, and at the end an allusion to the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad ; spanning the gulf between peoples of vastly different beliefs, Christian and Hindu, with a wish-endeavour to lift both the religions to the level of Universal Truth.

The opening lines are a powerful yet not intrusive reminder of the scene of the Crucifixion.

After . . . The shouting and the crying
Prison and palace and reverberation
Of thunder of spring over distant mountains.

Christ's cry from the Cross—"Eloi Eloi, lama sabachthani"—still has its force and its repercussions even though the "sweaty faces" have finished their work of destruction at Golgotha.

In the first part of the poem three themes are employed : 1) The Journey to Emmaus, 2) The approach to the Chapel Perilous (see Miss Weston's book), 3) The present decay of Eastern Europe.

The "sweaty faces" have arisen again, and for the same onimous intent, to make possible yet further destruction—so that the cry from the Cross is now the cry of the Nation—the World.

Is then "The Waste Land" only an expression of our desolation ?

No ! —the symbol of the *God Osiris* is of resurrection from the dead, as also is the symbol of Christ. It is a symbol of the occult fact of the god-man, the Avatar, allowing His 'death' to be the 'Seed' of the New Birth, and therefore New Hope for evolving Humanity.

In Eliot this New Birth will be ~~so~~ only if we can find *The Holy Grail*—The symbol of Female Fertility—The Mother, the universal Creatrix, which the world and humanity have forgotten.

What is that sound high in the air
Murmur of maternal lamentation ?

The Lance is buried—the holy vessel, the sacred Dish—*The Holy Grail* remains to be recognised,—in life, in the world, in consciousness ?

With this emotional symbology of the Crucifixion—the agony of stony places—Eliot takes us into the silence of our own "gardens"—we who were

once living are now dying—we continue to die rather than continue to live—and we die as the Spring thunder rolls out its Himalayan message to all mankind ;

“*Dāmyata, Datta, Dayadhvam*”.

Subdue ye, Give, Be Compassionate (surrender)
Enter into the Peace which passeth all understanding.

To sum up the crucial experiences of Tiresias : his Quest through his own private “Waste Land”—the poet’s ‘quest’ for a goal either through a “Fertility Religion” or through ascetic traditions, as positive paths to the goal—has failed. His quest for *love* has failed, his quest for *knowledge* has failed, and his seeking after a *higher spiritual Wisdom* has only just begun and must still proceed, not through any formal religion, but through inner conversion and *knowledge of the Self*. And through all this there is Hope, for there is a true acknowledgement of *Humility*—and out of humility comes forth the Glory and the ultimate Victory. For, is it not through falls and experiences of life, through the stumblings and the sufferings in the midst of striving humanity that one comes to true humility—the Humility before God ?

NORMAN C. DOWSETT

INTROSPECTION IN EMILY DICKINSON

◆ (Continued from June)

EMILY Dickinson is primarily concerned not with etching external nature but with the effect of certain natural phenomena on one's inward mood or consciousness : she is interested in the "internal difference", as is illustrated in the following poem.

There's a certain slant of light,
On winter afternoons,
That oppresses, like the weight
Of cathedral tunes.

Heavenly hurt it gives;
We can find no scar,
But internal difference
Where the meanings are.

None may teach it anything,
'Tis the seal, despair,—
An imperial affliction
Sent us of the air.

When it comes, the landscape listens,
Shadows hold their breath;
When it goes, 'tis like the distance
On the look of death.

"The simplest of her intellectual poems are those that merely record a mental phenomenon. She was curious to see how the brain worked, eager to find words for every thought she ever had, as though thoughts were a kind of inner fauna and she a new Adam naming the animals. Such notes on the mind could have been written only by a poet who was ceaselessly interested in the natural history of the intellect. For instance, it teased, after she had studied her ideas until each wore a familiar aspect, to encounter one that she ought to be able to recognise but could not identify :

A thought went up my mind to-day
That I have had before,
But did not finish,—some way back
I could not fix the year,

Nor where it went, nor why it came
 The second time to me,
 Nor definitely what it was,
 Have I the art to say.

But somewhere in my soul, I know
 I've met the thing before;
 It just reminded me—'twas all—
 And came my way no more.

“Again she recorded without comment the shock of finding a gap in the sequence of her reflections where she had not expected a break to occur :

I felt a cleavage in my mind
 As if my brain had split;
 I tried to match it seam by seam,
 But could not make them fit.

The thought behind I strove to join
 Unto the thought before,
 But sequence ravelled out of reach
 Like balls upon a floor.”

(Whicher)

Wrung out of a great central pain and renunciation of her womanhood, Dickinson's poems reveal singular power in recording psychological states. Her interiorization and her psychological adventurings represent a new sort of frontier; and her record of the inward life offers a new and strange hinterland for exploitation. Of the poems which represent the inner conflict, two stand out prominently : *After Great Pain* and *Time Assuages*.

After great pain a formal feeling comes—
 The nerves sit ceremonious like tombs;
 The stiff Heart questions—was it He that bore ?
 And yesterday—or centuries before ?

The feet mechanical go round
 A wooden way
 Of ground or air or Ought,
 Regardless grown,
 A quartz contentment like a stone.

This is the hour of lead
 Remembered if outlived

As freezing persons recollect
 The snow—
 First chill, then stupor, then
 The letting go.

We may try to understand this poem according to the interpretation by Brooks and Warren. The pain referred to is obviously not a physical pain; it is some great sorrow or mental pain which leaves the mind numbed. The "nerves sit ceremonious like tombs". There are two images here. The nerves are like a group of people dressed in black sitting in the parlour in formal hush after a funeral. They are also "like tombs". Why is "tombs" such a good symbol for a person who has suffered a great pain (whether it be a real person or the nerves personified)? The tomb has to a supreme degree the qualities of deadness (quietness, stillness) and of formality (ceremony, stiffness).

The imagery suggests the common quality of stiff lifelessness throughout the poem. The heart is stiff, the feet walk a "wooden way," the contentment is a "quartz contentment," the hour is that of "lead". The sense of numbed consciousness is made explicit by the statement that the feet move mechanically and are "regardless" of where they go. The lines are bound together not only by the constant reference of the imagery to the result of grief but also by the fact that the poet is stating in a series what happens to the parts of the body, nerves, heart, feet. The heart numbed with pain has lost the sense of time and even of its own identity. A "quartz contentment" involves an extension of the common association of stoniness with the numbness of grief. Again, a quartz is a crystal; and so "quartz contentment" is a contentment crystallized, as it were, out of pain. There is also an implied irony: the contentment arising out of great pain and numbness is a contentment out of inability to respond any longer, rather than the ability to respond satisfactorily and agreeably. Then the poet proceeds to the new figure, that of the freezing person, which is the only fully developed image in the poem, which condenses the effect of those which preceded it. The line 'Remembered if outlived' is powerful and implies that few outlive the experience to remember it to relate it to others. The experience of grief is like death by freezing: the chill, then the body becomes numbed (stupor) and then the body unable to stand the fight gives up the battle and dies (letting go). The correspondence of the stages of death by freezing to the effect of the shock of deep grief on the mind is close enough to make the passage very powerful. Also the first two stanzas present the mind's attempt to hold in, the fight of the mind against "letting go"; and the image in the third stanza presents the final dissolution.

They say that "time assuages,"—
 Time never did assuage;
 An actual suffering strengthens,
 As sinews do, with age.

Time is a test of trouble,
 But not a remedy.
 If such it prove, it prove too
 There was no malady.

Here is a poem which is a dramatic generalisation of an implied challenge to the permanence of her devotion; and one of her friends or members of her family trying to console her that she would get over her heartbreak in time. Emily's instinctive feeling finds expression in this poem.

Emily Dickinson has written poems which reflect her recognition that the highest kind of conquest is not physical but spiritual—self-conquest in the light of divine perfection. These poems record how she is in the central Christian tradition and is indifferent to the merely outward panaceas of contemporary humanitarians and reformers who sought Utopia by re-making institutions. The meaning of the poem quoted below is obvious.

GROWTH OF MAN

Growth of Man like growth of Nature
 Gravitates within,
 Atmosphere and sun confirm it
 But it stirs alone.

Each its difficult ideal
 Must achieve itself,
 Through the solitary prowess
 Of a silent life.

Effort is the sole condition,
 Patience of itself—
 Patience of opposing forces,
 And distinct itself.

Looking on is the department
 Of its audience,
 But transaction is assisted
 By no countenance.

●

HOWLERS BY ENGLISH SCHOOLBOYS

A SOVIET is a cloth which keeps your dress clean at dinner....

*
**

Certain areas in California are cultivated by irritation.

*
**

The process of turning steam into water again is called conversation.

*
**

Pope wrote principally in heroic couplets....

*
**

Sir Winston Churchill is a British statesman who has been nationalised by the Americans.

*
**

Shakespeare was a very polite man. He often said "Go to," but he never finished the sentence.

*
**

Oliver Cromwell had an iron will and a large red nose, but underneath were deep religious feelings.

*
**

Mussolini is a sort of material used for ladies' stockings.

*
**

A monologue is a conversation between two people, such as husband and wife.

*
**

The feminine of bachelor is lady-in-waiting.

*
**

The inhabitants of Paris are called Parisites.

*
**

A quack doctor is one who looks after ducks.

*
**

Paraffin is the next order of angles above seraphins.

*
**

A mosquito is the child of black and white parents.

*
**

A pedestrian is one of those people motorists run over.

*
**

A polygon with seven sides is called a hooligan.

*
**

A grass widow is the wife of a dead vegetarian.

*
**

What is the difference between a window and a widow ? You can see through a window.

*
**

My father has been decapitated for a number of years.

*
**

Liberty of conscience means being able to do wrong without bothering about it afterwards.