

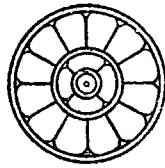
# MOTHER INDIA

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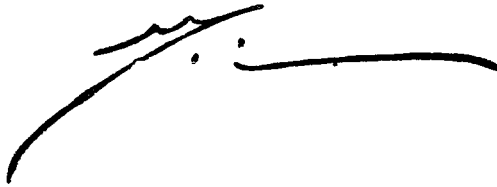


Lord, Thou hast willed, and I execute.

A new light breaks upon the earth,

A new world is born.

The things that were promised are fulfilled.



# MOTHER INDIA

MONTHLY REVIEW OF CULTURE

Vol. XV

No. 12

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*"Great is Truth and it shall prevail"*

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## CONTENTS

		<i>Page</i>
WORDS OF THE MOTHER		.. 5
PRAYER FOR PERFECTION (Poem)	<i>K. D. Sethna</i>	.. 6
TALKS WITH SRI AUROBINDO	<i>Nirodbaran</i>	.. 7
SOME PROBLEMS OF SADHANA : Letters of Sri Aurobindo	<i>from Nagin Doshi</i>	.. 12
REMINISCENCES : TWO GREAT WARS—I (Translated by Sanat K. Banerji from the Bengali)	<i>Nolini Kanta Gupta</i>	.. 16
OLD LONG SINCE : 9 (Translated by Parichand from the Tamil)	<i>Amrita</i>	.. 20
DESTROY ! (Poem)	<i>Janina</i>	.. 25
LORD ! (Poem)	<i>Venkatarama</i>	.. 25
THOUGHTS	<i>Girdharlal</i>	.. 26
A CORNERSTONE	<i>Jobst Muhling</i>	.. 27
"THE NEW FRONTIER" : JOHN F. KENNEDY AND THE CALL OF SRI AUROBINDO	<i>Marilyn Widman</i>	.. 29
WHO KILLED KENNEDY ? (Poem)	<i>Naresh Bahadur</i>	.. 31
ALDOUS HUXLEY AND THE MYSTICAL WAY	<i>K. D. Sethna</i>	.. 32
YOGA IN AN INDUSTRIALISED WORLD : A Letter	<i>Austin Delany</i>	.. 44

## CONTENTS

		<i>Page</i>
MYSTICS AND SOCIETY :		
Chapter II : The Doctrine of the Mystics	<i>Sisirkumar Ghose</i>	.. 50
HOW THE MOTHER'S GRACE CAME TO US		
(Compiled by Har Krishan Singh)	<i>P. Padmarao</i>	.. 55
UNFAMILIAR INDIA :		
IV. Ancient India's Contribution to the World		
	<i>Compiled by K. D. Sethna</i>	.. 56
RESURGENT INDIA : A Review-Article	<i>Tinkari Mitra</i>	.. 58
BOOKS IN THE BALANCE		
The Flute of New Life	<i>Review by P. Raghava Raju</i>	.. 64
Little Story Books	<i>Review by Norman C. Dowsett</i>	.. 65
The Young Scientist's Approach to Light	<i>Review by Jugal Kishore Mukherji</i>	.. 65

### Students' Section

THE DESCENT OF THE BLUE : A Drama	<i>Chinmoy</i>	.. 66
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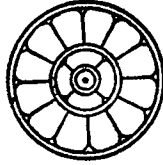
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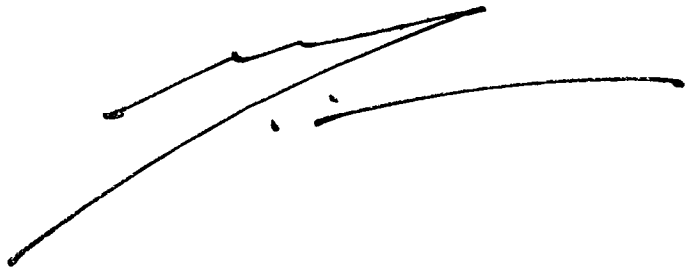
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Whatever is new will  
always meet an opposition from  
conservative people. If we yield  
to this opposition, the world will  
never advance one step.



## **PRAYER FOR PERFECTION**

Out of our darkness lead us into light—  
Out of false love to Thy truth-piercing height—  
Out of the clutch of death to immortal space—  
O Perfect One with the all-forgiving face !

From Thy pure lustre build the mind anew—  
From Thy unshadowed bliss draw the heart's hue—  
From Thy immense bring forth a godlike clay—  
O Timeless One self-sought through night and day !

K. D. SETHNA

## TALKS WITH SRI AUROBINDO

(We are continuing from the issue of December 5, 1963, the earliest talks that Nirodbaran recorded in his note-book as having taken place after the accident to Sri Aurobindo's right leg in 1938. After them we shall resume our usual series.)

DECEMBER 12, 1938

N READ some of Tagore's last poems, which were supposed to express spiritual experiences.

N : Is there anything here ?

SRI AUROBINDO (*smiling*) : Nothing much, except that he speaks of some light in the first poem.

N : In the rest he speaks of losing the body-consciousness and of the world-memory getting fainter and fainter.

SRI AUROBINDO : Yes, but that means death.

Q : Doesn't it mean that he is getting into another world? He speaks of stars, etc.

SRI AUROBINDO : Well, if he was getting into another world, why on earth doesn't he say so ? The poem is hazy. The Vaishnava poets have clearly stated their experiences.

N : D told me that once Tagore in an agony of pain tried hard to concentrate and ultimately he separated himself from his pain and got relief. Isn't that a spiritual experience?

Sri Aurobindo : Yes, that is a spiritual experience.

N : I remember also to have read in his autobiography, *Jivan Smriti*, that one day he felt a sudden outburst of joy and all Nature seemed to be full of Ananda. The outcome of that feeling or experience of bliss is supposed to be the poem, *Nir-jharer Swapna Bhanga*, "Interruption of the Dream of the Fountain".

SRI AUROBINDO : Yes, that too is a spiritual experience. What does he say in the poem ?

N : He speaks of a fountain breaking all barriers and rushing towards the sea in Ananda.

SRI AUROBINDO : But why does he take that symbol ? Was it in that symbolic form that the experience came ?

N : I don't think so.

SRI AUROBINDO : Then why doesn't he write the experience as he got it ? Nobody reading the poem will realise that he wrote it from some experience. He has a tendency to be decorative, and the danger of decorativeness is that the main thing gets suppressed by it.

Take, as an opposite example, that line about Usha, the Mystic Dawn, from the Rigveda, which I have quoted in *The Future Poetry* :

*Vyucchantī jīvam udīrayantī uṣā mṛtaṁ kañcaṇa bodhayantī.*  
 "Raising high the living, awakening someone dead."

When one reads it, one feels at once that it is written out of experience. It tells us directly of the Dawn-Goddess that she is raising higher and higher whatever is manifested and brings out all that has remained latent, unmanifested. Of course, one has to be familiar with the symbols ; then the thing becomes quite clear.

N : But mystic poetry is bound to be a little hazy and vague, at least to those who are not mystically minded. Tagore also has written simple and clear poems in his *Gitanjali* : for example, *āmār mātā nata kare dāo* ("Let my head bow down".) Perhaps one can write poetry of that kind mentally too. Is personal experience always necessary ?

SRI AUROBINDO : No. One need not have personal experience for such poetry.

N : You once compared mystic poetry to moonlight and spiritual poetry to sunlight.

SRI AUROBINDO : No, I meant occult poetry to be like moonlight. There are two kinds of mystic poetry : occult-mystic and spiritual-mystic. That poem of mine, *Trance*, with its moon and star, or my *Bird of Fire* is occult-mystic, while the Sonnets are spiritual-mystic. For instance in the sonnet *Nirvana*, I have put exactly what Nirvana is. One is at liberty to use any symbol or image, but what one says must be very clear through the symbol or the image. Say, for example, those lines from the Rigveda :

Condition after condition is born,  
 Covering after covering becomes conscious;  
 In the lap of the Mother he sees.

Here images are used but it is very clear to anyone knowing the symbols what is meant and that it is a result of genuine experience. Or take another example :

The Seers climb Indra like a ladder,  
 Along with the ascent all that remains to be done becomes clear.

It is an extraordinary passage, expressing perfectly the experience. Do you see that ? Indra is the Divine Mind and, as one ascends higher and higher, whatever has still to be done grows visible and distinct. One who has that experience can testify how perfectly true it is and that it must have been written from experience, not from any power of imagination.

N : But sometimes cannot one write truly about spiritual things without experiencing them or being conscious of them ?



SRI AUROBINDO : Why not ? The inner being can have the vision and express it, without the outer having the least awareness of it.

N : Can one who is not a mystic write mystic poems ? Tagore—or X before he came here ?

SRI AUROBINDO : Tagore had a tradition of religious tendencies in his family. X had a mystic part in him. Unfortunately, he had many other parts also. Reading his earlier poems I predicted that he could be a spiritual poet. As soon as he came here, he went on very well in the first year of his sadhana; his inner mind opened and the things he wrote about the Mother were felt by him. His poetry was always associated with his higher parts.

DECEMBER 13, 1938

The Mother came to Sri Aurobindo's room at about 6 p.m. and began to meditate. All of us started meditating with her. After half an hour or so she went away. Sri Aurobindo looked twice at Dr. Manilal who seemed to be struggling to meditate.

SRI AUROBINDO (*smiling*) : Meditating ?

DR. M (*smiling back*) : Trying hard, Sir, but without success since last Wednesday when I had a splendid meditation. Many undesirable things come to disturb me.

SRI AUROBINDO : What are they ?

DR. M : Some nonsense.

SRI AUROBINDO : Some extraordinary nonsense like thought of perpetual attendance on your Maharaja patron or of the likely successor to Mussolini ?

DR. M : No. Sir, thought of the Maharaja comes very rarely. But why doesn't one succeed in meditation even after so much trying, while on some days it comes very suddenly ?

SRI AUROBINDO : That happens often to everybody except those Yogis who make meditation their only business. And even they have their blank periods.

DR. M : I see my friend N goes at once into meditation and starts drooping his head.

N : Yes, in despair. (*Laughter*)

SRI AUROBINDO (*to N*) : Do you go to sleep ?

DR. M : Can one go to sleep in despair ?

SRI AUROBINDO : As an escape, yes. There are some people who go to sleep standing. There was, for example, Rajnarayan Bose who would sleep standing, like a horse.

N : Did he use to practise meditation ?

SRI AUROBINDO : A little Brahmo Samaj meditation. (*Turning to N*) But you had a look of deep concentration on your face. Are appearances deceptive here ?

DR. M : No, Sir. As he is a poet he lives in higher regions.

SRI AUROBINDO : What about Shakespeare's statement that poetry creates fictions, tells lies ?

DR. M : He is not a poet of that sort.

How is it that some people lose at once their consciousness in meditation, and their body sways this side and that, even falls to the ground ?

SRI AUROBINDO : That happens with many. And that is why some Yogis bind themselves to a support to prevent falling. The Yogis who practise *āsanas* remain erect.

DR. M : How can one succeed in meditation ?

SRI AUROBINDO : By quietude of mind. There is not only the Infinite in itself, but also an infinite sea of peace, joy, light, power above the head. The golden lid, *hiraṇmaya pātram*, intervenes between the mind and what is above the mind. Once you break this lid (*making a movement of the hand above the head*) they can come down any time at your will. But, for that, quietude is essential. Of course, there are people who can get them without first establishing the quietude, but it is very difficult.

N : Is there a veil in the heart also ?

SRI AUROBINDO : Yes, a veil or wall of the vital being with its surface consciousness and emotional disturbances. One has to break through that to what is behind the heart. In some people the Force works behind the veil because it would meet with many obstacles and resistances if it worked in front. It goes on building or breaking whatever is necessary till one day the veil drops off and one finds oneself living in the Infinite.

N : Does the Force work all the time, even when there is no aspiration in the being ?

SRI AUROBINDO : Yes, in those who have an inner urge. The intermittent bouts of aspiration may be due to the action of the Force behind.

DR. M : We request you to tell us how to get all that peace, joy, light, power.

SRI AUROBINDO : The secret is to want it and nothing else. (*Smiling*) Too difficult, isn't ? Well, then, you have to wait. Yoga demands patience. The old Yogas say that one has to wait for twelve years before one can hope to get any experience. Only after waiting, one can complain. But you once said that you had many experiences. You have no right to complain.

DR. M : True, Sir. I told you how meditation used to come spontaneously at Baroda at any time and I simply had to sit down to meditate, it used to come with such force ! Occasionally it would come when I was just about to go to the Hospital, and the experiences of peace and of other things would last for days. And then came the period of lull : nothing happened at all. But surely meditation should visit us once a fortnight ?... Sometimes I feel a pull on the head upwards.

SRI AUROBINDO : Of course, it isn't the physical head. It is a happening in the subtle body, the mind trying to ascend towards the higher consciousness.

N : One sees things like hills or seas in dreams or visions. What is their significance ?

SRI AUROBINDO : They are symbols : sea of energy and hill of being with its different planes and parts, with the Divine at the summit. They are quite common. When one feels the wideness, a vastness as if one were expanding, that increases the opening. The heart can expand just as the mind can. (*Turning to Dr. M*) Have you never felt your inner being ?

DR. M : I have, Sir. I told you how I had found it and then lost it through fear. I felt as if I were going to die...

SRI AUROBINDO (*laughing*) : Ah, I forgot that tragedy !

DR. M : At one time I felt as if my head were lying at the Mother's feet. What does that mean, Sir ?

SRI AUROBINDO : It is the experience of the Psychic Being. So you had the psychic experience.

DR. M : But unfortunately I couldn't recognise it. (*Laughter*)

SRI AUROBINDO : It is this "I" that comes in the way. One must forget it, as if the experiences were happening to somebody else. If one could do this, it would be a great conquest. When I had the experience of Nirvana, I forgot myself completely. I was a sort of nobody. What's the use of Dr. Manilal So-and-so living with this "I" ? If in discovering your inner being, you had even died, it would have been a glorious death.

DR. M : What happens when the human consciousness is replaced by the divine consciousness ?

SRI AUROBINDO : One feels a perpetual calm, perpetual strength, one is aware of Infinity, and lives not only in Infinity but also in Eternity. One feels Immortality and does not care about the death of the body. And then one has the consciousness of the One in all. Everything becomes the manifestation of the Brahman. For instance, as I look round this room, I see everything as the Brahman. No, it is not mere thinking, it is a concrete experience. Even the wall, the books are the Brahman. I see you no more as Dr. Manilal but as the Divine living in the Divine. It is a wonderful experience.

## NOTE

In the Box-note to *Talks with Sri Aurobindo* in the issue of December 5, 1963, it was said that when the accident occurred to Sri Aurobindo's right leg in the early hours of November 24, 1938, Purani was the first to be summoned by the Mother. In the interests of historical accuracy we may record that the Mother simply rang the bell. At that time (about 2.25 a.m.) Purani happened to be preparing hot water for the Mother's early bath on the Darshan Day. On hearing the bell he ran up the staircase and learnt of the accident and was asked to fetch the doctor.

## SOME PROBLEMS OF SADHANA

(LETTERS OF SRI AUROBINDO)

SRI AUROBINDO : Whatever seriousness is necessary must come of itself from within. To be serious outwardly by rule is not needed. 30-1-1936

These things do not depend on definite mental reasons and cannot be dealt with by a mental rule. It is the oscillations in a mass of forces playing together and can be dealt with only by a fixed will in the consciousness to progress through all vicissitudes. 9-2-1936

*Q : I sense an up-and-down in the action of the Force and thus the intensity is soon lost.*

SRI AUROBINDO : The intensity very seldom remains even for a long time in these things—it rises and falls and rises again. That is the normal movement. 25-2-1936

It is quite true that hardly any try to lead a truly Yogic life by fixing the true consciousness in all the being. Some experience and a contented ordinariness seems to be the rule. 10-2-1936

*Q : You asked, "What circumstances? A Yogi or seeker of Yoga is supposed to lead the yogic life in all circumstances." I had meant the present circumstances of the sadhana, when so many have fallen into the clutches of the physical, and the lowest and darkest nature remains always so prominent.*

SRI AUROBINDO : If the prominence of the lower nature is a good reason for not trying to live the Yogic life instead of the ordinary one, then it is also a good reason for not doing Yoga at all. The business of the seeker of Yoga is to overcome the lower nature, and for that he must try to lead the Yogic life and not sit contentedly in the lower nature. 13-2-1936

Everybody has to deal with the lower nature. No Yoga can be done without overcoming it, neither this Yoga nor any other. A Yogic life means a life in which one tries to follow the law of Yoga, the aim of Yoga in all details of life. Here people do not do that, they live like ordinary people quarrelling, gossiping, indulging their desires, thinking of Yoga only in their spare moments. 13-2-1936

*Q: People say that the Yogis of other Schools can lead a better life with less difficulty. For they seldom need to touch their lower nature. They merely keep it quiet by the force of their higher or inner being. But is it not rather an excuse for not leading a yogic life here?*

SRI AUROBINDO : All that is simply an excuse. The Yogis of other Yogas do at least try to keep the lower nature quiet by tapasya; they do not think it quite the right and normal thing to indulge it. If the rule of this Yoga is to change the lower nature those who follow it must entirely try to do that, not consider it the right and normal thing to indulge the lower nature. 13-2-1936

Obviously, the outer life must be a true example of the inner, not a mere empty mould or form. But if the outer life is unyogic, that means that the inner is still unchanged in some, even in a great, perhaps the greater part of itself. 14-2-1936

*Q: You have said about the Divine: "He may give all that is truly needed—but people usually interpret this idea in the sense that He gives all that they think or feel they need. He may do that—but also He may not." But it is said that He supplies all over psychic needs.*

SRI AUROBINDO : In the end, yes; but here too people expect Him to supply them constantly, which does not always happen. 30-1-1936

*Q: To be desireless does not seem to need a long tapasya. Aren't there many people in the world who keep themselves off from desires: It is an elementary step of any Yoga to be desireless.*

SRI AUROBINDO : But people in the world are not desireless—only they control their desires, choose between them, accept some, reject others. 12-2-1936

Desire is a psychological movement, and it can attach itself to a "true need" as well as to things that are not true needs. One must approach even true needs without desire. If one does not get them, one must feel nothing. 12-2-1936

Those men who live in the self are always there at all times. Nothing in the outer nature can affect that. 17-4-1936

*Q: You wrote to me, "Those who seek the self by the old Yogas separate themselves from mind, life and body and realise the self apart from these things." How do they manage it so easily? Will not their realisation be prevented by the movements of Nature and will not these movements interfere with the realisation?*

SRI AUROBINDO : Of course they will—it can only be prevented by the lower movements if you assent to the lower movements; one who refuses to accept them as his real being, can always withdraw from them to the self. The movements of Nature become for them an outer thing not belonging to their true being and having no power to pull them down from it. 17-4-1936

*Q: Is there any difference between our way of seeking the self and that of the old Yogas?*

SRI AUROBINDO : Only that they sought it by one line alone, the line varying in different Yogas, while in ours it may come in several ways. 17-4-1936

*Q: Cannot a wall of protection be erected around me so that the general Nature may not touch me?*

SRI AUROBINDO : Rather difficult if you keep open to the Generals. The wall will go down each time. 5-3-1936

*Q: What are the Generals?*

SRI AUROBINDO : The Generals of the general nature, Ego, Demand and Desire. 6-3-1936

*Q: You said, "It (the dynamic descent) tries to come, but the habit of falling back into the physical inertia is still too strong." I think rather that the dynamic descent would relieve me of the inertia.*

SRI AUROBINDO : If the habit of the ordinary nature is not an obstacle to the descent, then what is the need of sadhana ? What prevents the whole higher consciousness from coming down and changing you into a superman in one second ? It is because the things of the lower nature offer an obstinate resistance that sadhana is necessary. 12-3-1936

*Q: How to meet such an obstacle in the sadhana?*

SRI AUROBINDO : By standing back from it and refusing to be made its instrument of the subconscious nature,—by a persistent will to live in the inner consciousness and live not for ego but for the Divine. 6-3-1936

To show what is written about experiences or to speak about one's experiences to others is always risky. They are much better kept to oneself. 14-4-1936

I cannot undertake to be telling you all the time all that is not perfectly Yogic in the details of your action from morning to night. These are things to see to yourself. It is the movements of your sadhana that you place before me and it is this that I have to see whether they are the right things or not. 7-5-1936

*Q: Would you not kindly point out to me a wrong action or movement without my writing about it to you?*

SRI AUROBINDO : A wrong movement sometimes but not your actions from moment to moment. That would be too long for you to write or for me to deal with. 8-5-1936

The actions are of importance only as expressing what is in the nature. You have to be conscious of whatever in your actions is not in harmony with the Yoga and get rid of it. But for that what is needed is your own consciousness, the psychic, observing from within and throwing off what is seen to be undesirable.

*Q : When you make a fresh opening in me, is it not possible to inform me one day in advance, so that I may keep myself ready?*

SRI AUROBINDO: No. Certainly not. Such a mental method would be of no use whatever. The experience must come of itself. 9-5-1936

When what you write is correct, I say nothing—when it is your physical mind that brings in wrong ideas, I correct. 10-5-1936

*Q : How is it that in writing a letter to you the higher things increase and become stronger?*

SRI AUROBINDO : I suppose it is because in the act of writing or rather in its beginning you enter into contact with the Mother and the Force. 10-5-1936

*From* NAGIN DOSHI

## REMINISCENCES

### TWO GREAT WARS

#### I

WE have been through two great World Wars in the course of our life in Pondicherry. This was quite an experience.

The two Wars were identical in their inner nature and import. From our point of view, they were both of them a battle of the gods and titans. On one side were the instruments of the gods, on the other of the titans. It is a curious thing, if not altogether strange, that Germany and, to some extent, Russia should have sided with the titans and England and France and America fought on the side of the gods.

This is something that happens always in the history of man, this battle of the gods and titans. Whenever there is a New Creation in the offing, and man is to be carried a step forward in his evolution, there comes up ranged against him the forces of Evil who do not want him to rise to a higher level of consciousness, towards the godhead. They want to hold man bound down in their grip.

Such a moment of crisis came to man in the time of Sri Krishna. The Kurukshetra War is known as a war of righteousness, *dharmayuddha*; it was a war of the gods and titans. On the battlefield of Kurukshetra Sri Krishna gave his message that was to initiate the New Age that was coming. In exactly the same way, Sri Aurobindo began to proclaim his message with the opening of the guns in the first World War. The War began in August 1914; on the 15th August of the same year came out the first number of his Review, the *Arya*. Another point of note: the *Arya* continued almost as long as the War lasted. The "official end" of the War came towards the close of May, 1921; the *Arya* ceased in January of the same year. The Mother had arrived in the meantime to make Pondicherry her home.

The War left India practically untouched and without any major upheaval. It came and blew over like a stray wind, even as the raids of the Emden did on the Indian seas. Our memories of the War are still associated with that strange episode. The German cruiser passed by the shores of Pondicherry without doing any damage here, though Madras city received a few shell-shots. But I distinctly remember how many of the local residents, that is, those who lived on the Pondicherry sea-face, fled pell-mell towards the west, in the direction of the present Lake Estate. They packed themselves into rows of "push-push" carts—we had no rickshaws in those days—and looked for safety among the ravines of the Red Hills, or perhaps was it to hide themselves in the waters of the Lake, like Mainaka of the Indian legend?



India had been under the protection of England, so it was Europe that had to bear the brunt of the attack. We escaped with just a mild touch, though it did produce a few ripples here and there. First and foremost of these was the birth of the Bengali army—not a professional army of paid soldiers serving under the Government, but a corps of national volunteers. With the sole exception of the Punjabis and the Gurkhas, Indian troops were not in those days considered as on a par with European soldiers in the matter of fighting capacity. And Bengalis of course were treated with special contempt. They had of late shown some courage or skill in the art of secret assassination, but in the opinion of many that was a “dastardly crime”. But a trained and disciplined army was quite another matter. Now, a band of young men from Chundernagore taking the opportunity provided by the War formed themselves into a corps of Volunteers, some fifteen of them. They were French citizens and were therefore to join the War on the side of the French and the British. They arrived in Pondicherry on their way to France, a band of young men beaming with courage and intelligence. Our Haradhan was among their number. The picture of young Haradhan, a tall erect figure of a man, calm and audacious, still lingers in my mind. He used to narrate to us on his return from the War many stories of his experiences. Once he had even been shipwrecked by torpedo and had to swim for his life to a life-boat off the coast of Tunisia. Haradhan has recorded his experience of the War in a booklet entitled “The New Ways of Warfare”, modelled on Barin’s “Principles of Modern Warfare” that we used to read in our early days.

Some of the War scenes of Pondicherry come to mind. Here there was no question of Volunteers. France has compulsory military training and Frenchmen on attaining the age of eighteen have to join the armed forces and undergo military training for a full period of one or two years. The Renonçants of Pondicherry, that is, those Indians who had secured their full citizenship rights by renouncing their personal status under the Indian law, were also subject to this obligation of compulsory military service. There was in consequence a great agitation among our local friends and associates. They had to leave in large numbers to join the French forces. Among them was our most intimate friend, David, the noted goalie of our celebrated football team. He had only just been married. I remember how regularly his wife used to offer worship to Mariamma (Virgin Mary) praying for his safety and well-being, during the period of nearly three years that he had to be away : they were of course Christians. The plaintive tones of her hymns still ring in my ears. David returned after the War was over, perhaps with the rank of Brigadier. I still remember the welcome he was accorded on his return. He later became the Mayor of Pondicherry. I also recall the story of our Benjamin. His mother burst into sobs as she learnt he was to leave our shores. There were so many mothers and sisters who had to shed bitter tears as they saw off at the pier the boatloads of men. Benjamin however did not have to go. He became a “reformé”, that is, disqualified in the medical test.

Within the country itself, Indian patriots with terrorist leanings tried to use in their own way this opportunity to beat England down to her knees. One such group, "the Gadr party", as it tried to land arms and ammunition obtained by ship from America, was caught red-handed. Another was led by "Tiger" Jyotin, our Tejen's father as you all know, who waged open war with the police at Buribalam in Orissa and died fighting with all his followers. We have a cinema film of the dramatic episode here. A third consisting of our 'refugee' patriots assassinated the tyrannical Magistrate, Ashe, through a conspiracy hatched in Pondicherry itself.

Whether or not such sporadic acts and activities had any real utility may be open to question. But a great and noble movement does not keep within the bounds of "expediency"; it proceeds along the lines of its inner urge and law. These patriots and revolutionaries had shown how much could be achieved by a nation of slaves, even in that epoch and under those circumstances, by a band of slaves and prisoners bound hand and foot by their chains; they had worked to the utmost of what was possible then and according to their capacity. The World War had brought them an opportunity; they thought they might be able to shake England off the seat of her power. They had taken it as self-evident that England's difficulty was going to be our opportunity.

From a larger point of view, the first Great War can be taken as ushering a *finale* to the French Revolution. The Revolution had rolled to the dust the heads of a single monarch and his queen. But the end of this War saw the disappearance of practically all the crowned heads of Europe. Those that remained like the monarchy in England were left as puppets without power. This was an external symbol whose real significance lay in the awakening of the masses and their coming to power. This meant that not only wealth and affluence but also education and culture were no longer to be the privileges of the few; they must be made available to all. Money and position must be within everybody's reach, all must get a chance to show their merit. To use our own terminology, the higher Light and Consciousness that are descending on earth and helping man forward in his march to the heights were now to find their fulfilment: they would be firmly established and become a living force in the general level of mankind.

That is why in the second place the message brought by the War was that of freedom and autonomy for all, for the individual as well as for the collectivity or nation. Colonialism was to cease to exist; even the smallest nations were to win their freedom. This new era of progress was begun by the First World War.

A third boon was to lay the foundations of an International Society. This no doubt implied that the different countries and peoples of the world were to attain their freedom and autonomy. But in order that the smaller units might be left in security and there might be a check on unjust dealings among the nations, there had to come into being a Society of Nations where the representatives of all the nations could meet. This is what came to be known as the League of Nations.

The unity of the human race was to be founded on a complex harmony of the diverse groups of men.

The ideal now was to create a race of men endowed with the highest gifts of education and training—what in the view of the sages and mystics would be a race of god-men—the transformation of man from the animal-state to that of the gods. But that was precisely what stirred the opposing Forces to action. They were to keep man distracted, lure him from the good path into evil ways, change him, not into a god but a demon, a titan, a ghoul. (Goethe once had presented this picture.) That is how man got his notion of the super-race, and the notion took concrete shape among a particular people and some particular individuals. That is what lay behind the rise of Hitler and his Nazis in Germany. Stalin and his Bolsheviks appeared as their counterparts in Russia. Mussolini was their henchman, a “satellite” in modern parlance. Our Puranic scriptures tell of the ancient Shumbha and Nishumbha, Hiranyaksha and Hiranyakashipu, Shishupala and Raktadanta, dual power of Evil defying the Divine Power. Something similar seemed to be happening again.

Here was precisely what lay behind the origins of the second Great War : the descent of Evil incarnate to bar the descent of the Divine Power.

*(To be continued)*

NOLINI KANTA GUPTA

*(Translated by Sanat K. Banerji from the original Bengali)*

## OLD LONG SINCE

(9)

I ARRIVED finally at Madras and was, therefore, cut off from my family. When now I look back upon this event, I seem to realise how far away was the action of my own will from that of the divine Will. If I had been acting according to my own inclination, I could never have come near the divine Presence. We are for the most part subject to petty desires and feelings. My life's course, was settled without my knowing it, as soon as the Master's glance embraced me. When I reached the crucial stage of my life, and felt pulled to and fro by the force of attachments on one side, and by that of the divine Light on the other, and stood swaying in the thick of the conflict, what was it that made me give up the life of the world and turn towards that of the Spirit? Who brought about this turning? Each time that I think over it, I have the feeling that I was not an agent but a mere tool, an instrument only, *mīmtta mātram*.

I stayed at Madras till the 3rd April, 1919. Even though I lived there, it was the Master's presence that guided me; in my heart there was ever the remembrance of Pondicherry. The word "Pondicherry" meant to my soul SRI Aurobindo—there was room for nothing else there. I studied for a year in the Intermediate Class at Madras. I used to come back to Pondicherry once a month. Sometimes, due to unforeseen circumstances, it would be once in two months.

At Madras I was fortunate to have one or two intimate friends. One of them was V. P. Karunakaran Nambiar. He was a student of the Law College. He had a boundless love for SRI Aurobindo. He believed that it was SRI Aurobindo who had given a new life to the Indian political movement. He felt, moreover, immensely attracted to SRI Aurobindo's writings. He made friends with me when he came to know of my association with SRI Aurobindo. He began accompanying me to Pondicherry without fail once a month. He used to put up at some hotel there. We would start from Madras on Friday by the night-train, get down at Pondicherry on Saturday morning, and return by the Sunday night-train. Nambiar had the good fortune to see Sri Aurobindo and speak with him on the Saturday night. Sometimes, on the Sunday night also, he would have a talk with Sri Aurobindo for half an hour, solely or mostly on English literature. It was Nambiar who, for the first time, made arrangements to borrow books in his own name from the Madras University Library and Connemera Library for SRI Aurobindo! He is no more—he died a few years ago.

In Madras I passed four years in George Town, in the house No. 14 at the corner of Baker Street, opposite to the Law College. Madras was not so crowded

between 1915 and 1919 as it is at present. I would go after 5 p.m. to the vast *maidan* of the High Court and be there all alone till 7 p.m. I would read at that time over and over again Sri Aurobindo's magazine *Arya* or his book of poems *Ahana*, and take immense delight in them. Did I understand them or not? What was it that delighted me? How did I enjoy them? All this my soul alone knows, I know nothing.

Wherever I happened to be—on the sea-beach, in the High Court grounds, in Pachchiappa College, in Baker Street or at Triplicane—no matter where, the memory of Sri Aurobindo burnt bright in my heart. The single thought in me was, "When will the next opportunity come for me to go to Pondicherry?"

Once on my way to Pondicherry, I met an Andhra young man, Chandrasekhar Ayya by name. He enquired of me, "How can I meet Sri Aurobindo?" I told him, "You may come with me and take your chance."

When I broached the matter to Sri Aurobindo, he put me several questions relating to Chandrasekhar—"Where does he come from?" "Why has he come to Pondicherry?" "Is it on account of some business?" etc., and then, at last he consented to meet him. The interview between Sri Aurobindo and Chandrasekhar lasted not more than five minutes.

Later on, I remember to have met Chandrasekhar Ayya once or twice in Madras. Whenever he came to Pondicherry, I would be with him. He never failed to have Sri Aurobindo's *darshan*. His first interview with Sri Aurobindo for only five minutes laid the foundation of the priceless things he gleaned in future from Sri Aurobindo. Unlike the late V. P. Karunakaran Nambiar, Chandrasekhar plunged heart and soul into Sri Aurobindo for a few years.

A man of intellectual attainments, he was a scholar in Sanskrit and knew English very well. He could intently open his heart without reserve to whatever he would see as the best. Sri Aurobindo kindled the fire in him.

Chandrasekhar Ayya came ten or twelve times after I had left Madras finally and taken refuge in Sri Aurobindo. He used to put up at a hotel. At times he would stay four or five days at a stretch. He gave himself entirely to Sri Aurobindo. There grew up steadily an intimacy between them. As a consequence, he started reserving a room for himself on rent in a hotel here. Can the fire so kindled ever forsake him?

Subramania Bharati learnt the Rig Veda from Sri Aurobindo. Chandrasekhar also studied the Rig Veda with Sri Aurobindo methodically at a particular hour. He studied in this way for two or three years, not by the old traditional commentaries, nor in the old style, but in the light of Sri Aurobindo's own revealing interpretation. I listened to the interpretation with great delight, whenever I could be present.

In Madras I had the opportunity of contacting a number of big persons, some of whom were really great, and had talks with them. I met and talked with Annie Besant several times. I approached Mahatma Gandhi through Va Ra on Bharati's behalf. But none of them could appeal to my heart, which the Master had captured, whole and entire. I felt it had become indissolubly one with him. My Master—

how great he was ! An Avatar ! He mixed with me as if he was one of us, and had taken hold of my soul. How could I then be drawn to others ?

My friends urged me to join the Theosophical Society and, later on, some of them pressed me passionately and untiringly to join the Non-cooperation Movement of Mahatma Gandhi. My mind gave no response to such talks. How could it respond, when the Master's command had been otherwise, even if he had expressly told me nothing ?

Many great movements were, of course, going on, but they did not seem to me to reflect in any way the truth of man's inner being. They were conceived and carried on in the rush-light of the human mind.

Sri Aurobindo had somehow put away from us all outer attractions, turned our gaze inwards and made it centre in him. Politics, patriotism and social welfare had no attraction for me. What can the outer activities express but only our inner imperfections so long as we do not change our consciousness and nature ? What use then being wholly absorbed in them ?

Ten or twelve days before I left for Madras, Sri Aurobindo, in response to my repeated requests, consented to say a few words about the practice of Yoga. I would go to him daily between 5 and 5-30 p.m. He would speak to me in a simple way about the practice of Yoga. I noted down the major portions of his sayings.

Many years before his passing, Sri Aurobindo took away the note-books from me. He probably did not intend that those secrets of Yoga should be disclosed to others.

His sayings had been written down by me in two small pocket-books. They would be with me constantly as a guide throughout the four or five years of my stay at Madras. At night, during my sleep, they would remain under my pillow. Throughout the day they would be in my pocket. I would read them time and again.

In Madras my association with the members of the Theosophical Society began to grow by degrees. The "Home Rule" movement was in full swing. On the first floor of the house No. 2 at Broadway, almost facing the Law College, the "Home Rule" library was opened by Annie Besant with great *eclat*. Dailies, weeklies, monthlies in English and a small section of them in Tamil were displayed there. The Reading Room remained open from 7 or 7-30 in the morning to 9 at night. Many people would come to read the magazines. The hall was quite spacious and a number of electric lights kept burning from 6 to 9 p.m. There were about half a dozen cupboards which got filled up within a month of the inauguration of the Reading Room.

By 9 p.m. the library-gate would close. I was left in charge of the vast library with its Reading Room. From 9 at night to 7 next morning it would be, as it were, my own home.

At night my friends, relatives and school-mates used to come and see me whenever they liked. In addition to the hall, there were a small room and, to the East, a bath-room. It was like a palace for me. I arranged for my meals at a Brahmin hotel in Tambu Chetty Street. I had not given up my room in the house No. 14 in Baker Street,

I have written all this in detail, because when I moved from the house in Baker Street, I made the house at Broadway my residence for nearly four years.

It is not necessary to write how I was in Madras and in what way I lived. But how through certain circumstances, through association with some genuine and sincere persons my soul took its course in this life, and how my life developed under their shadow by the grace of the Master—all this becomes a source of disinterested joy as I remember and describe it.

Some four or five months before I left for Madras, Sri Aurobindo would sometimes say in a casual way, "Whatever happens, detach yourself from the happenings and learn to watch them as a Witness. Do not get involved in them." Although I could not grasp the full implications of this mantra of initiation, it left a deep imprint upon my heart.

This single mantra acted as an unfailing sustenance of my life during my stay at Madras for four or five years. How it became by stages effective in my sadhana is, however, another story into which I do not wish to enter here.

I have already mentioned that many persons used to come and read magazines in the Home Rule Library when I was there. One of them was a student of the Law College. He became intimate with me and kept a close watch over my way of life.

When I was with the members of my family I had to observe the usual religious rites and ceremonies. But in Pondicherry, out of their sight and reach, I could afford to be free. In Madras I was quite free to move about and act as I wished. No rule was binding on me. But in the heart of this freedom something within me would go on uttering in a low tone, during sleep or at odd moments during the day, something like a voice from afar, "You are in bondage. The chains are holding you tight." I could not clearly catch the sense of it—I was drowned in the surface noise and whirlpool. I lost all discrimination of the true and the false. But in whatever condition I was, and into whatever hell thrown, the Master, the Lord of my soul, would be with me and within me, and never abandon me.

The person who was closely observing my movements in the "Home Rule" Library had come to Madras from Kumbhakonam to study in the Law college, as I have said above. He lived in a small rented house with his wife in Mannadi. He was a Vaishnava, and, having somehow come to know that I too was a Vaishnava Brahmin, he tried to correct my nature and my life in what he thought was the right way. He would bring to the Library books of short stories in English, written in a simple style. Each story contained moral lessons to help one live religiously. Handing over one such book to me, he would say, "Keep it as long as you need it, and return when you have finished it. I shall then give you another book." He was probably older than I by three or four years.

As he had a doubt that I was not reading the books he gave me, he proposed one day that we should read the books together. This, after a few days, I found rather boring. So far as I remember, his name was Krishnaswami Iyengar.

Once a week he would invite me to his house for meals. He found out in a few

months that all his efforts to change my ways of life and make me follow religious observances had been in vain. He had failed to perceive that in my heart was ever burning the light of Sri Aurobindo.

I have referred briefly to my initiation. It did not, however, follow the traditional way. And what I have called the mantra of initiation—the often repeated command of Sri Aurobindo to detach myself from all happenings and practise to be only the Witness Purusha—this mantra was not given as such. The traditional method consists in the Guru's choosing an auspicious day and moment, and softly uttering the mantra in the sishya's ear. But Sri Aurobindo's way was quite different. One may intensely seek for the Guru and, seeking thus, one may, by rare luck, find him. But the Guru, so found, may keep one waiting for years to be accepted as his disciple. This is the traditional way. But Sri Aurobindo's way, I repeat, was different. As we grew intimate with him, we felt within us that he had already accepted us. In silence the sadhana had begun in us. The Guru's Grace and the sishya's receiving it were a spontaneous development, without even the need of a single spoken word. According to their capacity and fitness—*adhikāra*—some disciples would make steady progress in Yoga, while others would have a sudden and, sometimes even a marvellous, out-flowering of literary and artistic talent. Each one would receive the Master's silent inspiration in his own distinctive way, and according to the fitness and aptitude of his nature.

AMRITA

*(Translated by Parichand from the original Tamil)*



## **DESTROY !**

O Thou, destroy ! Explode, Heart's secret bomb,  
The ego rase to the ground. And, when wide-torn,  
Then crush, O Love, the mortal wound's black womb  
That nothing more of our I is born.

Death's atoms split to dust of Suns and cast  
Vibrating Truth on the dead and blissful Field,  
In yearning Void the soul's sweet mighty Vast,  
On our Hiroshima the deathless build !

Let the ONE into holy structures grow  
From golden seeds that fall where falls Thy blow.

JANINA

## **LORD !**

*(An English rendering of a Sanskrit sloka from Mukundamala of Kulasekhara Alwar)*

I do not bow at thy feet  
With any earthly desire.  
Fear of Hell I have none  
Nor would I win the creeper-soft  
Maiden-limbs in gardens of paradise.  
Oh ! let my heart but throb and thrill,  
Life after life, with Love's white wonder-fire.

VENKATARANGA

## THOUGHTS

WHAT is Love worth if it does not overpower obstinate ignorance and ego ruthlessly and then massacre them both unflinchingly ?

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To face him, to look into his eyes, is terribly difficult.  
Whom ? — Love.  
Why ? — He is cruel.  
To whom ?  
To all those who are less than Love.

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My Being is constantly crying. For what ?  
For constantly dying. For what ?  
For constantly living a wider and wider and a higher and higher life. For what ?  
For fulfilling His Will. And ?  
Nothing else.

GIRDHARLAL

## A CORNERSTONE

IN the Integral Yoga very much depends upon the renunciation of everything that contributes to what is called maturity or, where this has already been developed, of maturity itself. For the only thing that is of importance here is progress, that is to say, a movement from below upwards, from what we have been to what we shall be. This is growth and to make the line of our growth as straight as possible in order to reach our goal along the shortest way is all that the Integral Yoga as a system of psychological development wants to teach us. Maturity leads us away from this line into a spiral. A great part, perhaps even the greatest part, of our consciousness and energy is used for building up a personality, a superficial representative of our true self, an ego. The original purpose of this frail and wry building might have been to unfold the capacities of human nature, to manifest in its fullness all that has become possible at this state of evolution and to create a firm foundation upon which the edifice of future growth can safely rest. This purpose however has been betrayed as far as human beings are concerned. It has become the means for enjoying the result of our growth. Early in life we begin to think of the time when at last we will be able and permitted by society to indulge in the pleasures of existence for which we have suffered arduous years of immature growth. We want to blossom, to show what we have become and we already long for the fruits that will be ours if we move along the horizontal line of least resistance.

In the Integral Yoga all this has no place. Here we are concerned with growth only and every hour spent in maturation means retardation and delay. But this essential renunciation is a difficult task, difficult especially in the Integral Yoga. If we could quit the world it would be easier, much easier. There would be no need for a personality, this psychological puppet, no representative of ourselves would be necessary to meet the problems of existence, no ego to assert itself successfully among others and to shine forth with whatever little light there may penetrate. That is the reason why the ascetics found solitude so enormously helpful for their inner progress. The wall that in normal life protects us from many blows and unwanted influences upon the tender structure of our true nature which we did not know or did not care to develop and to strengthen can be pulled down without any danger of our being exposed to the forces of the world. But as the goal of the Integral Yoga lies in the world as much as above the world we must find another solution. To do Yoga in normal life, specially in the West, where the cult of character, personality and maturity is stronger than anywhere else, seems almost impossible, at least for a beginner and this in the very first instance because of the necessity for a protecting personality. One of the best solutions is doubtless a life in a spiritual community where the fence can be removed without the danger of being harmed.

The necessity of this renunciation results from the fact, that our personality stands between what we think ourselves to be and what we really are. The stronger this structure of the ego, superimposed upon the true self, the more complex and intricate its formation, as it is the result of egoic development, the more rigid and fixed its constituting forces, the more difficult it is for us to penetrate this tough shell of our being in the attempt to realise and manifest our soul. The summons to become like children is only one way of expressing the necessity for breaking down the obstacle of personality so that it may be easy for the soul to lay its hand on our nature. In the West the outward-directed tendencies of human nature have, in the course of time, produced an extraordinary powerful personality which however is seldom without coarseness and heavy obscurities. In the East this development has not been so emphatic with the result that here the contact with the soul is easier established, the touch of the Divine more readily perceived. Surrender means to sacrifice our personality, to adopt the psychic attitude as our sole existential attitude in our nature, and opening is but another term for decreasing the egoic forces and thus permitting the soul-force to enter and transform. Once the soul is manifest there is no need for any outer representative. Nature becomes the direct expression of the true Person and every action is supported, every influence received by the Divine in us.

The renunciation of our personality may be, for many, a task too hard to accomplish. Our personality is dear to us. We have fostered and cultivated it through many years not without effort, labour, sorrow and pain and we are proud of our strongly marked individuality, the original expression we have given to our nature. We are proud of our principles and habits, of our opinions and our ways of dealing with the world, which seemingly safeguard and facilitate our life. And yet there is no Integral Yoga without this essential renunciation. For in it all depends upon the undivided, integral employment of our entire being for the single purpose of our growth and progress towards the true goal of all existence.

JOBST MUHLING

## “THE NEW FRONTIER”

JOHN F. KENNEDY AND THE CALL OF SRI AUROBINDO

*(The following was written by an American, as a note in her private journal, in February, 1961, just after President Kennedy's inauguration. It may be felt today as eerily meaningful for the tragic turn of events which have taken place in America.)*

AN American who sits before the photograph of Sri Aurobindo—just down the street from the Mother's special Presence—feels a particular excitement and promise in John Kennedy's concept of the “New Frontier.”

The worldly brigades are aware that the President's historic phrase is in the nature of a symbolic culmination, an appellation for the surge so long in moving over the ocean of history. It is this feeling for historicity which made him the Man of the Hour, politically. Because America's destiny could be ignored no longer ; because that young Spirit would be denied no longer ; because the concept of Unity in Diversity will manifest in spite of all obscurity, the American consciousness has opened to the possibilities foreseen by Sri Aurobindo and substantiated in his victorious Yoga.

As long ago as 1915, when he wrote the initial chapter of *The Ideal of Human Unity*, Sri Aurobindo could predict the dreadful prospect which a technical totalitarianism might inflict on mankind. The sentence of conformity could be juxtaposed against peace all too easily, with the resultant loss of diversity. But what does “diversity” mean in this context ? Just that which has been readily forgotten in our time : the delight of difference ; the heterogeneity of relation ; the spontaneity which is antithetical to fear.

One cannot pretend that many learned, clever and even poetic voices have not been raised in alarum against the imminent enslavement of man to his self-created machine world which seems now capable of effacing the precious quality of personality. Especially in America is the awareness growing that somehow the valuable element of individuality is in peril ; hence a desperate rebellion on the part of sensitive persons which ranges from “a wild intensity of weakness” (in a phrase of Sri Aurobindo's) to smug theorization.

To suggest that by his “New Frontier” President Kennedy means the same thing as Sri Aurobindo would be inadequate to the role of each : to Sri Aurobindo because he is the greatest Sage of modern times, building his edifice of Realization upon the boundless fields of inner experience as all men are capable of attaining it ; to President Kennedy because his is the unique portrait of the Man of Action who

has heard his Call, marshalled his forces and, acknowledging such unseen powers as History and Ideas, prefers to deal pragmatically and decisively with political events, albeit with a sense of humility and good humor.

Where then the *raison d'être* for the comparison? In the simple fact that both turn to *man and his will to choose*. The ever-growing awareness of everyone everywhere to indulge his primary right—not within a social, cultural or economic context even—but insofar as any man becomes conscious that there is an alternative to what he has been doing, living, thinking. *There is an alternative to what he is*. Dynamically, there is an alternative to limitations which becomes manifest by simply affirming that limits are transcended primarily by rejecting them as undesirable. Only the man who loves his prison, only the man who fears to lose his chains, only the man who glories in his littleness will insist that the first movement toward emancipation does not begin with himself.

Those of us abroad hear of a new American climate of hope, progress, vitality in its best sense. Whatever his future impact may be on his nation and global history, President Kennedy has been the willing agent for the operative force which now beckons humanity to self-exceeding.

MARILYN WIDMAN

## WHO KILLED KENNEDY ?

WHILE black and white debate, red stamps its views :  
'Kennedy is assassinated' shouts the news.

The hawking bullet swoops on one more dove:  
A heart is plucked that sang of peace and love.

Outlaw the bomb, its kin shall yet survive :  
The blow, the stab, the shot as ever thrive.

The dark pit looks at the peak with dire eyes :  
Vice still revels with a vengeance, virtue dies.

Nefarious broods of passion, spite and hate  
Still blight with impunity their contraries' fate.

Your brilliant rockets boomerang into gloom;  
Now blaze the inner space where lurks the doom.

Invoke the Light, invade the gulfs that hide  
The dynamite urges of the scheming Void.

Revive the soul, reclaim the slums of Mind,  
You surface-planning saviours of mankind!

The Killer of Kennedy is the ancient Foe  
Whose toll Life's waste-land edict-crosses show.

Earth's wounds agape at the drop of spirit's soar  
Entreat His healing hand for evermore.

Scars bloom into stars, one here in time, one there;  
In the hour of God Light must be everywhere.

World-values are bright visitants from the skies  
To shape things here in the image of paradise.

A vast redeeming stir is salvaging all—  
Nations and dreams and hopes that braved a fall.

NARESH BAHADUR

## ALDOUS HUXLEY AND THE MYSTICAL WAY

(The recent death of Aldous Huxley has brought up for fresh discussion the various sides of this highly effective writer. What is perhaps his most significant side, apart from his artistic inventiveness, is examined in the following article.)

### I

#### HUXLEY'S ARRIVAL AT MYSTICISM

WHEN Aldous Huxley, in high-brow ultra-modern mid-career, turned mystic, most of his readers were surprised. But that he should one day penetrate to the *via mystica*—at least mentally—was never really inconceivable.

To say this may sound well-nigh a paradox when we consider his old cynical attitude towards the mystics and his preoccupation with the peculiarities of the sexual instinct. But that preoccupation of his was not sensual: it was intellectual, a fascinated yet detached scrutiny—no wallowing of the mind in the various weaknesses so much as a lucid and vivid observation from a coign of vantage outside the muck. There was always an undertone of ridicule, a sense of the hypocrisy of sexual idealisms and a sense of the stupidity of sexual indulgences. Men are such fools, Huxley seemed to say, they fall so easily a prey to the copulative function: they talk with shining faces of the soul's yearning for its mate and then proceed to translate it into an idiotic play of the genitals, or else they are driven as by a gadfly, slip without love or even true lust into insincere adulteries and move like machines of inconsequent momentary desire. Thus Huxley not only saw through the sentimental pseudo-spirituality of Middleton Murry whom he satirised in *Point Counterpoint*; he saw as well through the shallow concupiscent antics of the New Freedom, the superficialities of the sophisticated satyrs. What remained to be seen through was the spell that D. H. Lawrence was casting with his inverted mysticism of the passionate Subconscious.

Lawrence had what might be called a dark light about him. His was an intuition of the Divine upside down, which made him see the gonads at the top and the idealistic mind at the bottom, the blind Subconscious as the supreme mystery and the unknown Superconscious as a puzzled reflection of it in the passionless intellect looking outside its own self for truth. The Life Force surging from the abyss of the abdomen, warm with its imperative instincts, absorbed in its propagative zest, unashamed of its quivering lust of body for body, happy and absorbed in the beauty of touch and clasp and interpenetration of flesh by flesh—an innocent debauchery untroubled by ideas of sin and spirit, a natural intensity of physical tenderness en-



veloping all in its close laughing voluptuous heat, an extension of unreasoning naked contact of life-energy to the whole universe in order to feel everywhere some primeval sea of dark entranced oneness : this was the religion of D. H. Lawrence. Lawrence was a tremendously sincere personality and he actually lived in the inspiration of the Subconscious. Expressed by him with rare genius, his gospel had an appeal for Huxley : it had honesty no less than drive, it threw no false halo round the hot surge of life's mystery as the hypocritical sexsentimentalists did and it gave sense to the elemental oneness the poet in Huxley had always intuited, some basic beauty in the world which was more immediate than the intellect's experience. Lawrence stood like a prophet among his contemporaries—wholesale-hearted, powerful-visioned, fiercely vital—warm and rich and deep with concrete realisation.

Huxley could not help being drawn to Lawrence. But he could not be quite absorbed by him. Lawrence tended to abolish the intellect instead of giving it a liberation beyond itself which would transform and fulfil its urge to order out the jostling world. Lawrence tended to befuddle the poetic faculty instead of giving it a luminous exaltation and not just a dark rapture. To both the intellectual and the poet in Huxley the Life Force appeared to be not its own finality : it was trying ever to exceed itself, to rise to values beyond its own first feeling and formulation it was always astray to bring out what was behind it, a secret it did not know and could not find altogether in its own physical passionate being. There was a discontent at its core, a gap in the midst of its richness, which could not be filled by mere instinct and blind tenderness and overflowing amorphous heat of the Subconscious. The evolutionary *élan* could not be set at rest by Lawrence, for life does not want mere physical companionship and physical self-propagation and physical ecstasy of the abdominal abyss. It wants a more complex, a more clear form of consciousness, a perfection that is greater than the gratified hungers of the body and of the vital being no less than the constructed equilibriums of the experimental mind. The keenest cry for that perfection Huxley could hear only in the mystics he had ridiculed and it could be heard undeniably even through the most ridiculous things they did.

In one of his books he speaks of Madame Guyon picking up from the floor a gob of spit thrown by some sick person and putting it into her own mouth. Madame Guyon was a genuine mystic : Huxley recounts with a cynical smile her morbid self-humiliation. But one may be sure that in his heart he was struck by this act to an attitude other than cynicism. A sensualist could snatch up the spittle of his mistress and swallow it with exultant lust. Any show-room in the underworld of Paris or Port Saïd will enact for you the drama of sensual coprophilia, men and women practising an intricate art of dirt. Under the sex-spell all perversities are possible ; but Madame Guyon's gesture was different in essence. It was, no doubt misguided and morbid, yet she was not delighting in filth—there was not the ghoulish, the demoniac complex in her, though the outward form of her act was such. She was moved to surpass the recoil of her nerves, the pride of her purity, the shortsight which

could not feel God's oneness everywhere and drew a line at so-called dirt. Her self-humiliation was a perverse aspect of her desire for self-transcendence ; it was an extreme point reached by the instinct of asceticism, the instinct to accept suffering and mortification as a discipline for the soul. To rise superior to every shuddering sense, to live in a consciousness that cannot be tarnished by any dirt of the world, to see on all sides the one Divine, to annihilate all self-conceit and self-importance, to bring an impartial unflinching love to all creatures as though all were a single Godlike spirit—nothing short of this lay at the root of Madame Guyon's gesture as it lay at the root of St. Francis's kissing the wounds of lepers in an ecstasy of adoration. We can recognise here the spiritual being drawn dangerously near the demoniac, the perverse—the lower forces trying to darken the higher ; but the presence of the higher cannot be denied nor can we deny the beautiful rapture that here seems to stoop so low.

Huxley, while holding up such things to scorn, could not avoid seizing with his keen intellect the superb *fons et origo* of the folly. How could he when he had before him not the follies merely but the marvellous exaltations, illuminations, self-dissolutions, beatific trances and their fruit in splendid action, regenerative work, life-transfiguring service ? So he faced the fact that amidst several aberrancies there was at the centre of mysticism a light which alone appeared to come from beyond the protean futility of the bare intellect or of the elemental life-force : it struck him as the only thing which had the power to bring a transforming, uplifting, harmonising magic that was lasting in its effect and gave human nature a really new mould. His aim henceforth was to fix upon the essential truth of mysticism and disencumber it of its erratic misuses. He came to believe that the intellect was not a discoverer of ultimate truth but an instrument for checking the lower passions, the personal vagaries and the delusions of grandeur that lie in ambush to trip up the mystic and seduce him into crooked paths—paths of morbid austerity, camouflaged sex, egoistic ambition, power politics. A keen watch for the authentic article and the detection of what is spurious and specious were Huxley's command to himself. The result has been a fine understanding and evaluation of the mystical experience in certain important aspects.

## II

### MYSTICISM ACCORDING TO HUXLEY

Mysticism, for Aldous Huxley, means the direct experience of a spiritual substratum integrating and unifying all things. Such a substratum is at once transcendent and immanent—transcendent to our ordinary self imprisoned in its separateness, yet immanent inasmuch as it is our own highest truth and essence, our basic oneness with the whole universe. As Ruysbroeck says, "God in the depths of us receives God who comes to us—it is God contemplating God."

Can the spiritual substratum be proved? Huxley admits that no perfect argument has been found to establish its existence by pure reasoning. But he urges that we cannot brush aside the evidence of mystical experiment. Thousands have practised both in the East and the West the mystical way and come upon profound realisations that are fundamentally alike. To argue, from the absence of mystical experience among the majority of human beings, that there is no such experience is to forget that knowledge is conditioned by one's state of being. How many can follow the mathematics by which Einstein establishes the theory of Relativity? One has to train oneself in tackling complicated equations\* before the actual sense is born that Einstein has made a discovery. Again, an Indian finds it impossible at the start to appreciate the beauty of European music. Even Europeans themselves are at times unreceptive. Ruskin is notorious not only for his description of a masterpiece of impressionistic painting by Whistler as "a pot of paint flung in the public's face" but equally for his summing up of Beethoven's symphonies and sonatas as "the upsetting of bags of nails with here and there an also dropped hammer." Patient training, however, has helped many an Indian to get at the glowing heart of counterpoint and harmony and orchestration. So too a man by changing his habitual state of being can so sharpen his perception that he can contact an infinite underlying unity of Consciousness behind all phenomena. He has to practise the technique of detachment, unselfishness and meditation. By detachment he gets rid of the obsession of desire; by unselfishness he loosens the clutch of finitude; by meditation he plunges the tranquillity and liberty acquired through detachment and unselfishness into the depths of his being to discover a vast oneness that is ultimate and absolute.

To Huxley this ultimate and absolute oneness is undifferentiated, indefinable, impersonal. He equates it with the unity without form and feature which the Upanishads often speak of. He sees in Buddhism substantially the same unifying basic principle. The highest realisation of the Christian mystics appears to him no other than this Atman which is Silence, this Nirvana which is cessation of all differences and processes. They too speak of "the superlucous darkness of silence" and of the necessity to "leave behind the senses and the intellectual operations and all things known by sense and intellect." With his "I know not, I know not" St. Bernard declares that nothing can be predicated of the ultimate reality, just as Yajñavalkya did with his "Not so, not so". Where, asks Huxley, in a transcendent-immanent God unlimited by our concepts, is there any room for personality? He is the pure Impersonal. By the Personal God Huxley understands a supreme Being with qualities who assumes forms, presides over the world He has created, has various relations with man and even incarnates Himself. Huxley looks upon the Personal God as the Truth pressed into the restricting framework of our senses, our emotions, our imagination, our analytic thinking: when we go beyond that framework into the sheer Godhead we reach the Impersonal. The status of a stepping-stone for those who cannot make the direct mystical leap is what Huxley grants the Personal:

according to him, all great seekers of the Spirit, even if they begin with the Personal, pass to the Impersonal as the final verity. To get fixed in the Personal is in his opinion to lose the fundamental essence of mysticism. And it is the stress on the Personal, with the emotional worship entailed by it, that in the Huxleyan world-view degrades religion.

How far is the contention against Personalism valid ? We must admit that the Personal as generally believed in and worshipped brings about a good number of debasing results. Huxley exposes them one by one. If a living human being is taken as the embodied deity we open ourselves to the perils of a Hitler-cult or the cult of a man like that American negro, Father Divine. A Hitler, the inspired Messiah of a particular race, would pack his followers brimful with the blind hatreds, intolerances and ambitions with which his own mind is charged. A Father Divine, commanding the implicit obedience of innumerable negroes, would corrupt many of them because of the shady side his character seems to show in money-matters. So long as he is good his influence is beneficial, but as soon as his defects have play he becomes spiritual poison. Power and sacrosanctity concentrated in a human being are likely to be a very mixed blessing: they may bring much exaltation, even incite noble actions, yet they are prone to misguide and pervert the master as well as the disciple. If not anything else, they often cover a multitude of sexual aberrancies: Rasputin, the Russian monk, supporting his debauchery with the cry, "I am a particle of the Infinite and whoever would unite with the Infinite must unite with me body and soul", no more than headlined a pretty common case of emotional crudity.

When a dead person is deified and worshipped, then too his shortcomings colour the life of his followers. Thus, even so fine a figure as Jesus of Nazareth brings in a host of limitations. If his biographers are to be credited, he was never preoccupied with philosophy, art, music or science, he almost completely ignored the problems of politics, economics and social relations. He is also reputed to have had bursts of anger, blasting a fig tree for not bearing fruit out of season, scourging shopkeepers in the temple precincts and causing a herd of swine to drown. His worshippers, therefore, have had a fatal tendency, says Huxley, to depreciate art and despise philosophy, to disparage the inquiring intelligence and to evade all long-range large-scale problems of politics and economics, and to put a halo round their intolerant angers and paint as "righteous" their irrational indignations. "We are right and the whole world is wrong and deserving of punishment if it does not give in to us"—this is regarded by Huxley as the dominant attitude of zealous Christians in the past. Narrow fanaticism itching to carry fire and sword everywhere in the name of religion was the natural outcome. Even now the obscurantist and the fanatic are often subtly at work.

Nor is harmful narrowness always avoided by directing devotion not to a human person but to an eternal omniscient all-powerful God who is considered in some way a person. In spite of warnings by theologians, the divine Person's nature

is most apt to be conceived after the human model. And feelings of intimate relation with a magnified Man in the skies make that Sky-Man seem a passionate partizan of his devotees : God thus becomes tribal and parochial, a ferocious fighter. Not only that, but he is also seen as a volcano of jealousy and greed—human frailties raised to the *nth* degree. Christians brought up on the Old Testament feel too often justified in giving outlet to their worst instincts by thinking that in doing so they are walking in the footsteps of the Lord. The promptings of one's own passions get easily identified with the "voice" of an all-too-personal deity. Huxley points out the appalling historical procession of divinely justified cranks, lunatics and criminals. Thomas Schucker, the Swiss Anabaptist, was divinely guided to cut off his brother's head in front of a large audience including his own parents! Smyth-Pigott, a recent confidant of the Almighty, fathered upon his parlour-maid two illegitimate children whom he piously blessed with the names Power and Glory ! There is no end to such instances. Besides, Personalism in religion breeds that enormous overvaluation of the individual ego which makes it so difficult for Westerners to transcend separativeness : they look upon any experience which goes beyond the personal self as destructive, debilitating, demoralising. They have, in addition, that sense of the "otherness" of God, the sense that God is somebody *out there* and that benefits to one can come only by the grace of this transcendent Being : a systematic cultivation of the inner life is disregarded and a resort made to a subtle or gross flattery through prayers and offerings, a kind of spiritual bargaining for personal rewards on earth as well as in a future heaven. Finally, the mentality of belief in rewards by an extraneous God tends to look upon worldly success as a sign of one's worth, as a clear stamp of God's grace on a man. The capacity to exploit and grind the faces of one's fellows and pile up riches on their impoverishment gets encouraged with a thoroughly good conscience. It is scarcely a coincidence that the first and most ruthless capitalists were nurtured on the tradition of Calvinism.

It is not surprising that Huxley sheers away from the Personal God. Not that he fails to see the beauty and fruitfulness often accompanying Personalism—the wonderful devotion it evokes and the tremendous energy it liberates. What he says is that as much evil is traceable as good to Personalism of one sort or another. The records of the Taoists, the Buddhists or the Atman-knowing Hindus are clean as compared to those of Christians and Mohammedans. He argues that no essential of religion is lost by the pursuit of the Impersonal. To his mind the finest mystics in Christian Europe—Clement of Alexandria, Dionysius the Areopagite, Tauler, Ruysbroeck, Suso, St. Gertrude, St. Mechtilde, St. John of the Cross, Eckhart and the anonymous author of *The Cloud of Unknowing*, to mention a few—were all impersonalists. Impersonalism is the only true remedy *à la* Huxley for the cramping ego of the human creature, for the narrow and violent bellicosity that is rampant today, for the brain-fog creating the huge muddle of contemporary life. Mysticism alone can transform man : this is his first article of belief. The second article is : the realisation of the Impersonal Divine is the sole mysticism that is truly

transforming. Profound meditation or the Yoga of Knowledge, leading to the one infinite and impersonal integrating Consciousness behind the Cosmos, and not emotional worship or the Yoga of Devotion, attaching one to a personal divinity, is the Huxleyan panacea for our erring world.

To appreciate Huxley's message we must get a little away from his terminology and dwell on the gist of his meaning. The one Spirit above form and feature is his ideal. For the personality-ridden West such an ideal is indeed necessary. Without it there can be for the East as well as the West no true liberation into the Infinite and the Eternal, no commonalty and solidarity with the entire world, nullifying the discordant differences of man and man. The unnamable and indefinable and immeasurable luminosity which is beyond the mere intellect and the small personality and yet hidden in our inmost being must be reached if we are to be utterly free of the restricting framework of our senses and our analytic thinking. Huxley's emphasis, therefore, on passing above form and quality in our mystical experience is a sign of outstanding wisdom. But does his distinction between the Personal and the Impersonal cut down to bedrock? Is his idea of the sheer Godhead as an impersonality totally excluding the Personal correct? Is he justified in limiting the Personal to what certain Personalists have made of it? What exactly is the sheer Godhead he regards as the ultimate and the absolute?

It can be said at once that the undifferentiated Atman of the Upanishads is not all that the Upanishads teach about the ultimate and the absolute. Among the Buddhists a featureless unity without form may be the *ne plus ultra*, but neither the Taoists nor the Upanishadic seers stop short with it. The Taoists speak of the unknown Oneness as taking shape in the multifarious cosmos around us: the world of form and feature is not utterly divorced from the nature of Tao. Much more forcefully in the Upanishads the Spirit is in the world and is actually the world as well as beyond the world, and it does not merely stand as an unmoving peace, the silent Atman, but on the basis of that peace acts as the Lord of the universe, Ishwara. The Upanishads have a comprehensive vision, which the later Gita inherits and uses for its own more pronounced synthesis of the Yogas of Knowledge, Devotion and Works. To split Devotion from Knowledge, the Personal from the Impersonal, is to take up an extremist position. To see in the ultimate and the absolute nothing save impersonality is to conceive too narrowly and in the formulas of popular religion the divinely Personal. To exclude the Personal from the sheer Godhead drives a sharp wedge between that Godhead and this cosmic phenomenon of manifold form and feature and renders the latter inexplicable and undivine. Huxley slips into these errors by a mistaken use of the two terms he brings to his evaluation of mystical experience. The evaluation is fine in insisting on an important aspect which popular religion often keeps out of sight: it is incomplete because of accepting popular religion's misconceptions and perversions as a devastating case against the Personal.

## III

## INTEGRAL MYSTICISM AND HUXLEY

Let us see whether Huxley's argument for the Impersonal God as against the Personal can bear analysis. First of all, it is incorrect to foist any guilt on mystics of the Personal, for the simple reason that those who do the infamous things Huxley recounts cannot be considered mystics in the real sense. A mystic is not one who merely professes belief in God, either personal or impersonal, or merely thinks about Him. A religious man or a theist thinker is not *ipso facto* a mystic. A mystic makes God his be-all and end-all : all else proceeds from his preoccupation with actually realising God. And in the course of his God-pursuit he observes a strict inner discipline of self-purification : without that discipline there can be no thorough mysticism. Did any of the doers of infamous things conform to this definition of a mystic ? Did they live a pure life ? Did they consecrate themselves wholly to Yoga of one kind or another ? They certainly did not : is it surprising that they played the lecher, the persecutor, the money-grubber, the power-politician ? If an adherent of the Impersonal practised no self-purifying discipline, would he ever attain to any lasting mystical realisation ? And if a man who worships the Personal purifies himself and does the Yoga of Devotion, he will be no part of the story Huxley tells of "divinely inspired cranks, lunatics and criminals." Detachment and unselfishness are as much imperative for a personalist in mysticism as for an impersonalist. To attempt by a Yoga of Devotion to reach the Personal God calls for an outgrowing of one's small and stumbling and sinful ego as rigorously as does the Yoga of Knowledge. Take any of the outstanding European devotees—or any of the great bhaktas of India. Was Mirabai a crank ? Was Ramdas a lunatic ? Was Chaitanya a criminal ? Buddha with his formless and featureless Nirvana might equally be accused of crankiness, lunacy or criminality. The fact is that the true practice of Devotion, like the true practice of Knowledge, is free from pernicious results.

There is no intrinsic necessity for these results to follow from a belief in the Personal God. Huxley perceives this, but he is not clear about the domain where such results occur. That they are often found in the characters and actions of non-mystics shows merely the difficulty of conceiving and applying Personalism in the right manner. The risk of them cannot be avoided by setting Personalism aside. If, for example, in India religion has not led to persecution, the reason is not that Indian non-mystics have been impersonalists. They are as much addicted to the Personal as people in Europe. But the Personal is not understood in India as narrowly, as extraneously, and is not confined exclusively to this or that form of Godhead, to any one particular messenger of truth, to a fixed and closed set of dogmas. All depends on how Personalism is followed : Impersonalism, followed wrongly, can also be a baneful. If non-mystics took a belief in the Impersonal as the basis of their conduct, how would they behave ? Being unpurified, they would easily be led to

misinterpret the Impersonal and use it as a cloak for many of their own crude impulses. So the question is : Can Personalism be shown to be a truth which, in spite of its misconstruction and misapplication by non-mystics, may be put forth as equal to Impersonalism, if not even as larger than it and more helpful to man's spiritual growth ?

The answer becomes clear the moment we look at the terms "personal" and "impersonal" in the correct light. According to Huxley, to be an infinite spiritual unity devoid of form and feature is to be impersonal. But thus to conceive impersonality does not contradict the meaning of the personal. What is a person essentially ? A self-aware being. To be an infinite unity devoid of form and feature does not negate self-awareness : it negates nothing save limitation. God is the highest being, the transcendent-immanent conscious Self or Spirit : God is not abstract existence, an abstract substratum or integrating principle. We can speak of God as existence and a substratum or integrating principle when we use the language of philosophy. In the language of mystical experience, God is the all-blissful living One whom nothing can limit. Impersonality is just the divine Person's infinite freedom from dividing forms and restricting features.

When we look at God in this manner, we do not find emotional worship and the Yoga of Devotion basically inferior to the path of knowledge. In the greatest mystics the Godward-yearning heart and the Godward-turning mind meet rather than break apart as Huxley thinks. Huxley commits an error because he believes that the heart cannot yearn for the formless and the featureless which in his eyes is the utter Godhead. But the European mystics whom he enumerates did not keep their hearts away from God. The author of *The Cloud of Unknowing* which for Huxley is almost the Bible of mysticism speaks expressly of "the keen dart of longing love." He speaks also of the naked will fastening upon the Divine, but love is to him the fundamental motive power. To Dionysius the Areopagite, love is "the eternal circle" from man to God and from God to man. A whole treatise on how God is to be loved was written by St. Bernard. St. John of the Cross lifts a paean to the power of love. Ruysbroeck is immersed in love for God. So too, we may add, are St. Catherine of Sienna, St. Francis of Assisi and the one whom Huxley mentions in his book *Ends and Means* as a type of the highest mystical realisation, St. Teresa of Avila. The verdict of the best mystics of Europe is for love as the master-key to the secrecies of the Ineffable. And love is definitely a function of the heart : it is definitely an emotion. If you like, call it, when it is mysticised, a soulful emotion—a deep and unturbid intensity—yet emotion it is. With love the pre-eminent mystics concentrate their will on the Unknown. Their meditation is the upward will borne on the wings of an inward love. Both mind and heart fly hand in hand to the eternal Mystery. And when they face that Mystery they come into contact with something more than a unifying or integrating spiritual principle : they burn with the touch of their Lord, they fuse with the being of their Lover. Not one mystic of the first order in Europe but speaks of God as the Lover and the Lord.



Even *The Cloud of Unknowing* which insists most on the indefinable mystery of God and the inapplicableness of qualities to Him cannot help implying the Lord and the Lover. When its author says, "Lift up thine heart to God with a blind stirring of love," the word "blind" means unrestricted by any particular image or idea so that God may not be confined by form and feature : it does not cut off the Divine's infinite freedom and unity from active conscious relation to the mystic and to the world at large. *The Cloud* describes "passive contemplation" as the ideal state in which God is the agent and His worshipper but an instrument which he uses for His divine purposes. Here God is the Lord of aim and action. To the question : how can the sense of separate individuality be destroyed? the anonymous author of *The Cloud* replies : "Only by a full special grace full freely given by God and also a full according ableness on thy part to receive this grace." Here God is the Lord of choice and gift. It is impossible, in the first place, that such a God should not be a Person and, in the second, that a Lordship of aim and action and choice and gift should not imply a Lover.

God is not a pure impersonality nor is He an utterly qualityless and relationless Person. *Bhakti* is justified in approaching Him both as a Person and as a Lord of Love. A large and luminous devotion in the deep heart, allied with an intense concentration in the hushed mind, seems to have been the Yoga of the ancient Upanishads as also, in a more explicit version, of the Gita. But the Upanishads and, still more, the Gita, differ in an important respect from *The Cloud* : *The Cloud* does not give us all the shades of significance Personalism can and should assume. God is seen and contacted only in His infinite unitary aspect, whether immobile or active. The Gita, developing the Upanishadic realisation, seeks in God, side by side with this, the support and explanation of the multiple universe and of the embodied individual. Something of the same seeking appears to have been done by the most notable Christian saints.

The soul in us may plunge into an infinite Unity, but to be rapt in that Unity to the exclusion of life and the world cannot be the goal. Huxley writes of the goal of spirituality as a double consciousness : "St. Teresa tells us that in the 'seventh mansion' she could be conscious of the mystical Light while giving her full attention to worldly business. Indian writers say that the same is true of those who have attained the highest *samadhi*." The cosmos and our individual soul's life in it are not excluded from the Huxleyan mysticism. But no origin is offered for them. Do they have their origin in God ? If they do not, they must be illusions or else realities essentially different from God and deserving to be struck away from our spiritual search. If they do, how could they have come from the Unity for ever infinite ? Huxley's God is the vast in which all things have their basic oneness : how are we to account for the diverse and the individual ? Something real stands foundationless. The Divine must be at once one and many, infinite and individual. At the same time that He is an infinite unity unbound by forms and features yet ever capable of assuming them, a unity beyond our world as well as underlying it, the God

whom we have to realise must be a multitudinous Consciousness holding the archetype, the perfect ideality, of this cosmos which has emanated from Him, and working in this cosmos to manifest that archetype; He must also be a divine Individuality archetypal of ours and pressing within us and everywhere for His self-manifestation. A mysticism of the double consciousness extolled by Huxley would not find all its terms supported and explained without a triple status of the Divine.

Out of the triple Spirit the most urgent for our needs is perhaps the individual aspect. In popular religion the divine Individual is too much a magnified man and too much an extraneous being. The crude anthropomorphic vision is certainly to be exceeded, but we must not forget the truth behind anthropomorphism. Our minds vitiate the truth without a wider vision of Him as the Absolute and the Universal no less than the Individual. God must be contacted as all three. Contacted thus, He promises a fulfilment that is integral. As the Individual, however, He must be predominantly our goal. Then alone can He, while liberating us into the immutable Infinite and His secret of activity and formation as well as into His multitudinous Cosmicising Consciousness, take into Himself most positively, most completely, most significantly the whole of our natural embodied existence.

It is the Divine's individuality that appears to the tranced eyes of mystics as various godheads of light and is felt as the glorious Presence within their ecstatic hearts. It is the Divine's individuality that is responsible for the ancient intuition that God incarnates Himself and descends as the 'Avatar' to share our burdens, walk our ways and help us to divinise our own life. The worship of prophets and 'gurus'—instruments through whom God teaches us and leads us to Him—is born from the same spiritual reality. Dangers of sensuality and egoistic ambition may seem to lie thickly in the path of the Yoga which starts with the individual Divine and His touch upon our emotions. But this Yoga is the sweetest and swiftest and through it the Supreme comes closest to our striving personality and reveals the profoundest possibilities of our regeneration, provided we do not turn oblivious of the fact that He whom we adore as the Man-God is at the same time a cosmicising immensity and multiplicity, an Absolute who can be undifferentiated and static yet formative and dynamic. Certain schools of *bhakti* go no further than a restricted happy play of the human individual with the divine Individual. The play of sweetness and light must broaden itself till it embraces all the aspects of the Eternal, for, through the divine Individual we can enter into the totality of the triune Spirit. Huxley is right when he urges the imageless Godhead as indispensable to mysticism: the image of Krishna or Christ is not sufficient. But neither is the imageless God enough. Pursued to its finality, the silent Atman that is Huxley's choice, negating as it does all that we and the cosmos are, must logically no less than psychologically impose on the mystic a withdrawal from whatever is active and differentiated. In India it is clearly perceived that the silent Atman, if it be the highest, must lead to the view of the world as a stupendous illusion of activity from which the soul has to escape. Life is transformed to some

degree if the silent Atman's natural draw away from life and action is resisted : only, the resistance remains unjustified and incongruous. Huxley does not perceive this; nor does he perceive that what can be called the impersonality of the Formless and Featureless is nothing save the absolute liberty of a supreme Person or self-aware Being. If Huxley is no illusionist, his God of absolute liberty must be also an absolute capacity of form and feature and must possess the archetypal truths of all things, truths which He works out here. The cosmos travails to manifest Him; our individual self with its active personal nature of mind, heart and sense seeks in Him a blissful answer for their own perfection. God as the ultimate Person who is at once absolute, universal and individual, who is transcendent to our limited ego but immanent in the depths of us and whom we have to unite with in various ways is the true integrating reality, the true transforming experience. Towards none other than Him—and with miraculous life-transforming implications beyond any that mystics in the past dreamt of—are we called to-day by Sri Aurobindo.

K. D. SETHNA

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## YOGA IN AN INDUSTRIALISED WORLD

(A LETTER)

*(Chandrakant Patel to whom this letter is addressed, is an outstanding young student from Kampala, Uganda. After completing his law studies he won a scholarship at King's College, Cambridge. Stimulated by the associations of the College with Sri Aurobindo, he questioned Austin Delany during the latter's World Union tour of East and Central Africa. The following is one of the letters of the ensuing correspondence.)*

Dear Chandrakant,

The heart of your letter :

“Admitting that Yoga has spiritual objectives and has means to achieve it by vigorous and disciplined approach—I am inclined to be a sceptic insofar as it professes to offer a new set of thinking and a new form of life.

“I feel that the more the world becomes industrialised the less it is likely to incline towards spiritualisation. The advent of industrialism in Europe and America has lessened the powers and indeed the following of organised religion. It is evident that industrial wage-earners are relying more on human agency for their welfare than the agency of nature.

“People whose life is closely knit with nature, *e.g.* fishermen and farmers, are apt to be more religious than, say, industrial workers.

“I shall be grateful to you if you will let me know your views on the efficacy of Yoga in an industrialised world. It has puzzled me when I ask myself if Yoga could be translated to the needs of an affluent society. Given choices I fear a man is more likely to spend his Saturday afternoon watching football or going to a Bingo session than attending a Yoga lesson...

“Being a pessimist by nature, I have managed to ignore the brighter side of it all !”

Scepticism, dear lad, is simply knowledge taking a breather and a legitimate pessimism the agency of equilibrium.

Ism or Ism't ? Industrial-*ism* and spiritual-*ism*, two separate ideological structures twained and never to meet ? Let 's see. (May we take industry to be applied science ?)

“But if Science has thus prepared us for an age of wider and deeper culture and if in spite of and even partly by its materialism it has rendered impossible the return of the true materialism, that of the barbarian mentality, it has encouraged more or less indirectly both by its attitude to life and its discoveries another kind of barbarism,—for it can be called by no other name,—that of the industrial, the commercial, the economic age which is now progressing to its culmination and its close. This economic barbarism is essentially that of the

vital man who mistakes the vital being for the self and accepts its satisfactions as the first aim of life. The characteristic of life is desire and the instinct of possession. Just as the physical barbarian makes the excellence of the body and the development of physical force, health and prowess his standard and aim so the vitalistic or economic barbarian makes the satisfaction of wants and desires and the accumulation of possessions his standard and aim. His ideal man is not the cultured or noble or thoughtful or moral or religious, but the successful man. To arrive, to succeed, to produce, to accumulate, to possess is his existence. The accumulation of wealth and more wealth, the adding of possessions to possessions, opulence, show, pleasure, a cumbrous martistic luxury, a plethora of conveniences, life devoid of beauty and nobility, religion vulgarised or coldly formalised, politics and government turned into a trade and a profession, enjoyment itself made a business, this is commercialism. To the natural unredeemed economic man beauty is a thing otiose or a nuisance, art and poetry a frivolity or an ostentation and a means of advertisement. His idea of civilisation is comfort, his ideas of morals social respectability, his idea of politics the encouragement of industry, the opening of markets, exploitation and trade following the flag, his idea of religion at best a pietistic formalism or the satisfaction of certain vitalistic emotions. He values education for its utility in fitting a man for success in a competitive or, it may be, a socialised industrial existence, science for the useful inventions and knowledge, the comforts, conveniences, machinery of production with which it arms him, its power for organisation, regulation, stimulus to production. The opulent plutocrat and the successful mammoth capitalist and organiser of industry are the supermen of the commercial age and the true, if often occult rulers of its society.

“...Therefore in a commercial age with its ideal, vulgar and barbarous, of success, vitalistic satisfaction, productiveness and possession the soul of man may linger a while for certain gains and experiences, but cannot permanently rest...” — SRI AUROBINDO, *The Human Cycle*, pp. 94-96.

Here surely is an exegesis of both the positive and negative formations of science and industry, and the explicit development of the spirit in man from this salutary chaos. The dialectic of the Rishi merges and interpenetrates industrial-*ism* and spiritual-*ism*, and the categorical separation of mental-*ism* gives way to the Oneness of evolving consciousness.

Prism, in fact, is the only “ism” we should take seriously—the rest is schism.

“... , apart from the inability of any ‘ism’ to express the truth of the spirit which exceeds all such compartments, we seem here to be near to the real way out, to the discovery of the saving motive force. The solution lies not in the reason but in the soul of man, in its spiritual tendencies. It is a spiritual, an inner freedom that can alone create a perfect human order. It is the spiritual, a greater than the rational enlightenment that can alone illumine the vital nature

of man and impose harmony on the self-seekings, antagonisms and discords. A deeper brotherhood, a yet unfound law of love is the only sure foundation possible for a perfect social evolution, no other can replace it." (*Ibid.*, p. 273.)

You speak of 'organised Religion' and seem to equate it to spirituality. By that phrase I take you to indicate the militant proselytising faiths, those that seek to organise the 'unorganised.' A Yogic view of organised religion is glimpsed in the following :

"... On the other hand, we must recognise the fact that in a time of great activity, of high aspiration, of deep sowing, of rich fruit-bearing, such as the modern age with all its faults and errors has been, a time especially when humanity got rid of much that was cruel, evil, ignorant, dark, odious, not by the power of religion, but by the power of the awakened intelligence and of human idealism and sympathy, this predominance of religion has been violently attacked and rejected by that portion of humanity which was for that time the standard-bearer of thought and progress, Europe after the Renaissance, modern Europe.

"This revolt in its extreme form tried to destroy religion altogether, boasted indeed of having killed the religious instinct in man,—a vain and ignorant boast, as we now see, for the religious instinct in man is most of all the one instinct in him that cannot be killed, it only changes its form." (*Ibid.*, p. 215.)

"*Changes its form.*" And here you may detect the true explanation of the adherence of fishermen and farmers, of the falling away of industrial workers from organised religion. Surely the religious instinct has permeated all the great reform and revolutionary movements of the last two centuries. Can you not detect it in Social Democracy, Marxism, Anarchism, Scientific Humanism—Democracy itself? Where more than in the anti-colonial struggle for national independence? The CND... Committee of 100?

At this stage in my letter (and hoping you have not retired to a Bingo session), you may be muttering, "Yes, I'm for Love, Brotherhood, Truth, and Beauty." Indeed, you might think that you are being placed in the position of a man in a condemned cell being asked to sign a petition for the abolition of capital punishment. So let's more specifically to your question on the efficacy of Yoga in an industrial world... of its application to the needs of an affluent society. My quotation from Sri Aurobindo may seem another sprint to higher planes. But bear with me. *He always comes down.* Remember as you read this that the vital barbarian is not only a man in an iron mask, a prisoner of things, but a soul in a mask of inconscient or at most semi-conscient matter. We are being told what happens as Yoga reveals the Truth of the Spirit :

"We begin to perceive too the key to the enigma of matter, follow the interplay of Mind and Life and Consciousness upon it, discover more and more its instrumental and resultant function and detect ultimately the last secret of Matter as a form not merely of Energy, but of involved and arrested or instably

fixed and restricted consciousness and begin to see too the possibilities for the conscious and no longer the more than half-inconscient incarnation and self-expression of the Spirit. All this and more becomes more and more possible as the working of the Divine Shakti increases in us and . . . moves to a greater purity, truth, height, range. All depends on the psychic awakening in us, the completeness of our response to her and our growing surrender.”

The Shakti, the Executive Power of the Divine, is here incarnated,—the embodiment of Love, the Mother of the Sri Aurobindo Ashram.

You may think that if there is anywhere in the world a place where “the efficacy of Yoga in an industrial world” is being demonstrated, realised, it would be here. First, let The Mother in her own words encapsule the Ashram :

“There should be somewhere upon earth a place that no nation could claim as the sole property, a place where all human beings of goodwill, sincere in their aspiration, could live freely as citizens of the world, obeying one single authority, that of the supreme Truth, a place of peace, concord, harmony, where all fighting instincts of man would be used exclusively to conquer the causes of his sufferings and miseries, to surmount his weakness and ignorance, to triumph over his limitations and incapacities; a place where the needs of the spirit and the care for progress would get precedence over the satisfaction of desires, passions, the seeking for material pleasures and enjoyment. In this place titles and positions would be supplanted by opportunities to serve and organise. The needs of the body will be provided for equally in the case of each and every one. In the general organisation intellectual, moral and spiritual superiority will find expression not in the enhancement of the pleasures and powers of life but in the increase of duties and responsibilities. Artistic beauty in all forms, painting, sculpture, music, literature, will be available equally to all, the opportunity to share in the joys they give being limited solely by each one’s capacities and not by social or financial position. For in this ideal place, money would be no more the sovereign lord. Individual value would have a greater importance than the value due to material wealth and social position. Work would not be there as the means for gaining one’s livelihood, it would be the means whereby to express oneself, develop one’s capacities and possibilities, while doing at the same time service to the whole group, which on its side, would provide for each one’s subsistence and for the field of his work. In brief, it would be a place where the relations among human beings, usually based almost exclusively upon competition and strife, would be replaced by relations of emulation for doing better, for collaboration, relations of real brotherhood.

“The earth is certainly not ready to realise such an ideal, for mankind does not yet possess the necessary knowledge to understand and accept it nor the indispensable conscious force to execute it. That is why I call it a dream.

“Yet this dream is on the way of becoming a reality. That is exactly what

we are seeking to do at the Ashram of Sri Aurobindo on a small scale, in proportion to our modest means. The achievement is indeed far from being perfect but it is progressive, little by little we advance towards our goal, which, we hope, one day we shall be able to hold before the world as a practical and effective means of coming out of the present chaos in order to be born into a more true, more harmonious new life."

The Mother is, in effect, constructing here the prototype for a spiritual economy whose efficacy will be determined not by its capacity to produce things but, rather, *values*. Before this work penetrates the world consciousness, we shall necessarily require a new view of things, *i.e.*, of the whole structure and apparatus of an industrial society. Something of this outlook is caught in a recent article by Medhananda, our Ashram Librarian :

"Idealists also often express the feeling that man and his civilisation should turn back to the ideals of the past, to Nature in her unspoiled purity, or to the innocence of village life. But the long line of cars which on holidays streams out of our cities and back again in the evening, the endless suburbs of the industrial regions, the smoke of the steel ovens—much as we would like to object—are as much a part of Nature as the glaciers and the mountains, the birds and the antelope. What we see crawling along the highway is an expression of life as much as is a snail shell or the scales of a butterfly's wing . . .

"We may personally dislike the inconvenience of traffic in the big cities, the ugliness and the menace to health of the smog and the dirt and the noise which result from our teen-age technology. We may even suspect that man might have been happier if he had continued to live in an igloo, in a hut, in a wigwam or under a tree. But our personal comfort does not seem to be the unique aim of evolution, or Nature, or earth, or life, or even of God. There is no sign in the past as far as we can read the story from the rocks that the conservation of the individual or even the indefinite preservation of a special race was anywhere intended. But the movement of evolution in its whole seems to be clear. A growing awareness, a wider vision, a greater power, a more intense joy of being—these seem to be the ultimate aims of evolution and of God . . .

"The industrial revolution brought with it an ugly civilisation. But when we see something objectionable it is not that evolution has carried us in the wrong direction. Evolution has frequently been accompanied by revolution, and that seems to make place for ugliness. This is because that new something, that new-born baby has not yet fully evolved ; it is seeking for new forms. The day may come when our towns and other products of our industrial age will emerge from their cocoons of dirt and human misery and deploy their shimmering wings of beauty and power.

"Let us have faith in man's future, faith in that unseen but inbuilt guidance which led him out of some primeval sea onto the land, which taught him to stand



upright, taught him to look at the stars, to wonder who he was and what was his destiny, and to reach for a fulfilment beyond himself..."

Do you begin to see all of life and pre-life as an evolution towards the Truth? All life as a secret Yoga? And the specific practice of Yoga as the penetration of that secret, the conscious possession of it by man? For if you see that (or even if you tolerate the conception for a moment) you might be prepared to ask the question, "What is the efficacy of an industrialised world for Yoga?"

And—if that formulation emerges with any strength in your consciousness—it will at once present the possibility of a complete reversal of all the values taught under the heading of economics in the contemporary and secular university.

For if man is the evolved, and now the self-evolving, truth-seeker, and if industry is the mental formation of matter, then economics and its tributaries, value, price, wage structures, money, finance, class relationships, capital and means of production are manifestations of a higher consciousness expressing itself through collectivities. And unity with that higher consciousness places us at the junction of being, consciousness and bliss, of *Sat-chit-ānanda*—of *the Life, the Force, the Joy*—it makes us one with the One. In short, man will then be able to control the industrialised world so that it serves him, and turn from the primitive level of an imprisoned servitude to it.

Now in many pilot schemes here, the Mother is giving us the opportunity to apply the *a priori* truth of spirituality—the primacy of consciousness over matter—in workshops, building, paper-making, milling, baking, administration, sugar manufacturing, shopkeeping, printing, book-binding, village industries, tailoring, pottery, agriculture and much else. My own work has not yet developed along industrial lines, and my comments on them would be ill-informed, hearsay and,—most important of disqualifications—not experienced. I may, if you wish, take up individual plants for detailed discussion in subsequent letters.

Meanwhile, here's a comment from *Mother India* on the largest enterprise, the New Horizon Sugar Mills. In its first year of production, it broke all production records in India and contributed in taxes a sum equal to one-third of Pondicherry's income.

"The erection of the mill was started in the third week of November 1959 and in the record time of eight months... it was completed. On all accounts it was one of the quickest concerns in India to go into production. Today it is considered the best sugar mill in South India."

That's all for now, my friend. As you must realise, my letter can merely give the gist of the answer of psycho-science, of Yoga, to your question, "What is the efficacy of Yoga in an industrialised world?"

Sincerely,

AUSTIN DELANY

# MYSTICS AND SOCIETY

## CHAPTER II

### THE DOCTRINE OF THE MYSTICS

(Continued)

WHATEVER minor differences there might be in the doctrines of the mystics, they always add up to a total revaluation of our values, the only one worth having. It alone has a right to be, for it alone changes the foundation, the very texture of our consciousness, the ground or door of perception. Mysticism stands for the greatest revolution in human condition. It alone can counterbalance "this death of purpose"<sup>14</sup> which infects the modern world so through and through. At the end of his life the utopian H. G. Wells wrote that "the more he weighed the realities before him, the less he was able to detect any convergence whatever."<sup>15</sup> It is needless to point out that mysticism was not among the Wellsian "realities". Mysticism lacks and usually rejects the compulsive instruments of social, political and religious organizations and is better thus. It proposes the only kind of change that really matters. It asks men to change themselves and their ways. It is not that the doctrine by itself, not even the experience by itself, will open the door and do everything. No, all these are but counters, or like science, pointer readings, they point towards Reality, towards the More that we must be. Sometimes pessimistic on the outside, mysticism is our only hope.

There is, in fact, no other aim or theory of life that gives human life such dignity as the mystical. It points to "a living God and a personal self capable of communing with Him". Even where it is not theistic, the results are surprisingly alike, at least noble, better than what the non-mystical ever achieve or are capable of achieving. At least it defies or breaks the materialist mould and that is a great release. As Rhine has suggested: "It is the bearing of *psi* on an understanding of the nature of the human being... a faint flutter of encouragement to offset the depressing conception of man that is inherent in the atmosphere of this mechanistic age."<sup>16</sup> It points to a source of secret identity or immortality, an inheritance to which, at some stage or other, something in man responds. Perhaps the greatest value of the theory or doctrine is that it brings back meaning to life, the meaning of the Whole. Without being unduly anthropocentric, we whose mind is now at the end of its tether ought to know what it means. Mysticism is inherently ontological, the only "ism" that has a right to be so. In this view "All life is only a lavish and manifold opportunity given us to discover, realise and express the Divine." (The accent is on "all".) No philosophy of life can hold a candle to that, certainly not our popular prophets of

doom and latterday existentialists, saints and satanits alike. The one way to cure and confront them is to posit the reality of mystical insight, an insight into the Essence as a part of man's increasing and inevitable experience of life and himself if only he will co-operate with the emerging Truth. The doctrine of the mystics—and, we repeat, the mystical experience—are the only antidote to all the decadence and the diseases of civilization that seem to swamp us on all sides. To the "meaningless absurdity of life" which once darkened the mind of Tolstoy no less than that of many others, before and after, more and less known, there is but one answer—an experiential answer, that of the mystics, the saints and the seers. They have weathered the storm, gone through the veriest hell, not for a season of adolescent outing but with all the sober certainty of a mature encounter with the principle of evil, and yet stand firm, on the unassailable grounds of Being, *Sat, Istigkeit*. ("My mind in the flash of a trembling glance came to Absolute Being—That Which Is"—and other than Which Nothing Is.) It is a mariner's compass in man's long journey through time and the waters of life. Mysticism will not so much give us any particular truth or direction (How To Win Friends and Influence People) but "the whole working essence", "the meaning of the whole". It needs no other justification.

As a rule the mystical doctrine has been presented in metaphorical or symbolical terms. Jesus spoke through parables. "In parables spake he unto them...Unto you it is given to know the mystery of the Kingdom of God." Here, drawing upon Sri Aurobindo, we present, in outline, one version of the doctrine, from the archetypal poetry of the Vedas, which has the advantage that it also explains itself:

"Mystics...had an enormous influence on...early civilizations; there was indeed almost everywhere an age of the Mysteries in which men of a deeper knowledge and self-knowledge established their practices, significant rites, symbols, secret lore within or on the border of the more primitive exterior religions. This took different forms in different countries; in Greece there were the Orphic and Eleusinean Mysteries, in Egypt and Chaldea the priests and their occult lore and magic, in Persia the Magi, in India the Rishis. The preoccupation of the Mystics was with self-knowledge and a profounder world-knowledge; they found out that in man there was a deeper self and inner being behind the surface of the outward physical man, which it was his highest business to discover and know. 'Know Thyself' was their great precept, just as in India to know the Self, the Atman became the great spiritual need, the highest thing for the human being. They found also a Truth, a Reality behind the outward aspects of the universe and to discover, follow, realise this Truth was their great aspiration. They discovered secrets and powers of Nature which are not those of the physical world and physical things but which could bring occult mastery over the physical world and physical things and to systematise this occult knowledge and power was also one of their preoccupations. But all this could only be safely done by a difficult and careful training, discipline, purification of the nature; it could not be done by the ordinary man. If men entered into these things without a severe

test and training it would be dangerous to themselves and others; this knowledge, these powers could be misused, misinterpreted, turned from truth to falsehood, from good to evil. A strict secrecy was therefore maintained, the knowledge handed down behind a veil from master to disciple. A veil of symbols was created behind which these mysteries could shelter, formulas of speech also which could be understood by the initiated but were either not known by others or were taken by them in an outward sense which carefully covered their true meaning and secret. This was the substance of Mysticism everywhere."

Such ideas do not easily fit into the prevailing picture of social growth and progress from a primitive past. To admit an intuitive element in our ancestors is like upsetting the apple cart of our theory of a unilinear evolution and the universe. "The ancient idea about the Veda could not fit into this picture ; it was regarded as rather a part of ancient superstitious ideas and a primitive error. But we can now form a more accurate idea of the development of the race. The ancient more primitive civilisations held in themselves the elements of the later growth but their early wise men were not scientists and philosophers or men of high intellectual reason but mystics and even mystery-men, occultists, religious seekers ; they were seekers after a veiled truth behind things and not of an outward knowledge. The scientists and philosophers came afterwards ; they were preceded by the mystics and often like Plato and Pythagoras, were to some extent mystics themselves or drew many of their ideas from the mystics. In India philosophy grew out of the seeking of the mystics and retained and developed their spiritual aims and kept something of their methods in later Indian spiritual discipline and Yoga."

Through the symbols of discipline and the high training of will the seeker was moved towards a vision of "a Truth deeper and higher than the truth of outward existence, a Light greater and higher than the light of human understanding which comes by revelation and inspiration, an immortality towards which the soul has to rise. We have to find our way to that, to get into touch with this Truth and Immortality, . . . to be born into the Truth, to grow into it, to ascend in spirit into the world of Truth and to live in it. To do so is to unite ourselves with the Godhead and to pass from mortality into immortality. This is the first and the central teaching of the Vedic mystics. The Platonists, developing their doctrine from the early mystics, held that we live in relation to two worlds,—a world of higher truth which might be called the spiritual world and that in which we live, the world of the embodied soul which is derived from the higher but also degraded from it into an inferior truth and inferior consciousness. The Vedic mystics held this doctrine in a more concrete and pragmatic form, for they had the experience of these two worlds. There is the inferior truth here of this world mixed as it is with much falsehood and error, and there is a world or home of Truth, the Right, the Vast... . There are many worlds between up to the triple heavens and their lights but this is the world of the highest Light—the world of the Sun of Truth or the Great Heaven. We have to find the path to this Great Heaven, the path of Truth, or as it is sometimes called

the way of the gods. This is the second mystic truth. The third is that our life is a battle between the powers of Light and Truth, the Gods who are Immortals and the powers of Darkness... We have to invoke the Gods by the inner sacrifice... Our sacrifice is a journey, a pilgrimage and a battle,—a travel towards the Gods and we also make the journey with Agni, the inner Flame, as our pathfinder and leader. Our human things are raised up by the mystic Fire into the immortal being, into the Great Heaven, and the things 'divine come down into us... Finally, as the summit of the teaching of the Vedic mystics comes the secret of the one Reality<sup>17</sup>... and one bliss to which we must rise."

"Our earth shaped out of the dark inconscient ocean of existence lifts its high formations and ascending peaks heavenward; heaven of mind has its own formations, clouds that give out lightnings and their waters of life; the streams of the clarity and the honey ascend out of the subconscious ocean below and seek the superconscient ocean above; and from above that ocean sends downward its rivers of the light and truth and bliss even into our physical being. Thus in images of physical Nature the Vedic poets sing the hymn of our spiritual ascension.

"That ascension has already been effected by the Ancients, the human forefathers, and the spirit of these great Ancestors still assist their offspring... The seven sages are waiting still and always, ready to chant the word, to rend the cavern, to find the lost herds, to recover the hidden Sun... The soul is a battlefield... a world full of beings, a kingdom in which armies clash to help or hinder a supreme conquest, a house where the gods are our guests and which the demons strive to possess... Every shining godward Thought that arises from the secret abysses of the heart is a priest and a creator."<sup>18</sup>

In other words, the soul of man is a seat of sacrifice, a diving board into the seas of superconscience. What we do with it is the measure of what we have done with life and its possibilities. The choice is always ours. As Lecomte du Noüy has said : "Until man appeared, evolution strove only, from an observer's point of view, to manufacture an organ... Man continues to play his part but wants to comprehend the play... Instead of depending as formerly on the slow action of the biological laws and of chance, natural selection now depends on conscience... based on freedom which becomes in each of us the means put at our disposal to advance. According to the degree of evolution we have reached we will choose to progress or regress."<sup>19</sup>

Such, in brief, is the teaching of the mystics, or some of it. There can be no doubt that they have chosen, and what they have chosen. Whether and how far their example will inspire others each man must answer for himself. For always, and for a long time, the ascent, the awakening, the encounter, the sacrifice, is individual. Mass or forced conversion is not the mystic way. You alone are free and responsible, free to be free. The mystical claim, of an "experimental science", stands or falls by its psychology, primarily a psychology of the individual. To this we now turn.

## REFERENCES

14. Dorothy Berkeley Phillips, *The Choice Is Always Ours*, xxi.
15. The book was appropriately called *The Mind At The End Of Its Tether*. The entire mystic hypothesis is that there is something above and beyond the human reason.
16. J. B. Rhine, *New World of the Mind*, 212.
17. "They who see but One in all the changing manifoldness of the universe, unto them belongs Eternal Truth—unto none else, unto none else." Upanishads.  
 "All things are one." Heraclitus, *Fragments*.  
 As a result of his "experimental mysticism", as he calls it, Ouspensky found out : "This idea of unity of everything, in whatever sense and on whatever scale it be taken, occupied a very important place in the conception of the world and of life that was formed in me in these strange states of consciousness... We are accustomed to take things as separate. Here there was nothing separate ....I felt that the separate existence of anything—including myself—was a fiction, something non-existent, impossible." *A New Model of the Universe*.
18. Sri Aurobindo, *Hymns to the Mystic Fire*, pp. VI-VII, XII-XIII, XXIX-XXXII, XLVI-XLVII.
19. Lecomte du Nouÿ, *Human Destiny*.

## HOW THE MOTHER'S GRACE CAME TO US

It was on 18.9.63 at 9 a.m. that I rushed my son Páwan Kumar, aged 3½ years, who had suffered an attack of the ghastly disease Diphtheria, to the hospital on the advice of my family doctor. The superintendent and R.M.O. of the hospital examined the child, administered oxygen and gave injections every half an hour till 11 a.m. The doctors reprimanded me for neglecting the child to such a dangerous extent. The doctors told me that the condition of the child was causing anxiety but they were giving the best medical help. The day was gloomy, all the members of our family were plunged in grief. The news spread like wild-fire among our relatives, friends and well-wishers.

Scores of people gathered at the hospital at 4 p.m. All of them saw the condition of the child who was struggling for breath and was in the clutches of death. As the condition did not improve, the doctors were giving up hope of his survival. One of the doctors told me with profound grief that the heart of the child was slowly sinking. This came as a shock and tears rolled down my cheeks. In great distress I moved away from the crowd of relatives and friends to resort to prayer.

Just at that time a man approached me and, seeing me in great distress, advised me to pray to the Mother of Sri Aurobindo Ashram to save my child, and send a telegram to her. The advice was a God-sent message which went deep into my heart and I started prayers with intense devotion. Meanwhile an express telegram was on its way with a humble entreaty to save my son.

All the doctors were watching the condition of the child. There was the traditional silence of death. It was at 11 p.m. that the doctor in attendance noticed a sudden change in the condition of the heart of the child. He was overwhelmed with joy and remarked, "This change is miraculous ! It cannot be explained by Medical Science. It should be attributed only to some Divine Force."

Thus the child started improving day by day. It is my ardent belief, conviction and faith that the Divine Mother saved him from the jaws of death. All my friends and relatives who noticed the miracle bent their heads in profound honour and devotion to the Mother.

P. PADMARAO

*(Compiled by Har Krishan Singh)*

## UNFAMILIAR INDIA

### IV. ANCIENT INDIA'S CONTRIBUTION TO THE WORLD

WE have already mentioned some of the contributions : cotton, fired brick, the elephant for war and labour, drains and reservoirs to maintain cities. We have also mentioned the early Rishis' aspiration and realisation—the search for the One who is called by many names, the experience of the Supreme who can be approached in a thousand ways, ranging from stone-worship to contemplation of the Unmanifest.

India, still ancient but later than the Rigvedic, has on the cultural level some special contributions that can be summed up by way of a witticism. What does India's spiritual-philosophical contribution amount to ? The answer is : Infinity. What does her scientific-intellectual contribution amount to ? The answer is : Zero.

“Infinity” does not signify simply that the contribution is immeasurable. It signifies the experience and the concept of Brahman and Atman, the illimitable World-Ground, the undifferentiated All-Self spoken of in the Upanishads. “Zero” does not mean that the contribution is nil. It only means the mathematical idea of Zero, which is so important in all higher complicated calculations.

Perhaps the spiritual-philosophical contribution can also be stated as Zero, if we substitute the Buddhist version of Liberation : *śūnya*, Void—the transcendental Nameless that is empty of all that we know as existence in this universe, the Nirvana which Sri Aurobindo defines in a sonnet :

All is abolished but the mute Alone.  
The mind from thought released, the heart from grief  
Grow inexistent now beyond belief;  
There is no I, no Nature, known-unknown....

In the domain of mathematics too, the idea of infinity as the opposite of zero was clarified and developed in India.<sup>1</sup> But, while the knowledge of the mathematical zero goes back to the fourth century A.D. when the text whose copy is the anonymous “Bakshali Manuscript” was written, the mathematics of infinity was put on a sound basis by Bhaskara who is usually dated to the twelfth century A.D., a period which is medieval and not ancient. Among his demonstrations is one that establishes mathematically what had been recognised in Indian theology as early as the age of the Upanishads, that infinity, however divided, remains infinite.

<sup>1</sup> Most of the matter that follows is from A. L. Basham's *The Wonder that was India* (New York, 1954), pp. 495-96.



To almost the end of the ancient period belongs also the approximate value of 3.1416, expressed in the form of a fraction  $62832/20000$ , which is given by Aryabhata (usually assigned to the fifth century A.D.) for the geometric " $\pi$ ". This value is much more accurate than that of the Greeks.

It is, of course, well known that the so-called Arabic numerals are ancient-Indian. They are first found in the same text of the fourth century A.D. to which we have referred. But the earliest public use of the system of nine digits and a zero, with place notations for the tens and hundreds, is an inscription<sup>1</sup> dated 595 A.D. and hailing from Gujarāt.

In historical fairness, however, we must state that the Mayas of Central America had a numeral system of different signs up to twenty, with positional notation, long before India, although it had no effect on the world at large.<sup>2</sup>

*Compiled by* K. D. SETHNA

<sup>1</sup> *Epigraphia Indica*, II, 20.

<sup>2</sup> S. G. Morley, *The Ancient Maya* (London, 1946), p. 274.

## RESURGENT INDIA\*

### I

It is fortunate that in 1963, the year that marks the starting-point of what the Mother of Sri Aurobindo's Ashram has called 'THE HOUR OF GOD' and when the need of national integration has become a categorical imperative, the Allied Publishers of Bombay have released into the world of thought a work of enduring value, a book of books that mirrors the splendour of India's soul, And Prof. Sisir Kumar Mitra. Joint-Director of the Sri Aurobindo International Centre of Education, whose life-long study of History, pursuit of research and devotion to Mother India have taken a profound reorientation from the life and light of his great Master and who has accordingly made his assessment of modern India's resurgence from a new angle of vision and presented it in a form that is at once simple, natural, bold and moving, and in a perspective altogether unorthodox, has rendered the country a signal service.

The plan and pattern on which the author builds up the image of resurgent India is :

Firstly, how India's soul received from the Vedic Rishis (i) its immortal power of Infinite Light and its three modes of expression, *ṛtam*, *satyam*, *brhat*, 'the Right, the True, the Vast', (ii) the dynamic force of its marching mantra, *charaiveti* (march on) and (iii) its ultimate goal, the Vedic Rishis' golden vision, *daivyam janam*, divine birth, a divine race.

Secondly, how India has been in her resplendent Past which covers the Ages of the Vedas, the Vedanta, the Dharma and the Classical epoch upto about the middle of the Medieval Age.

Thirdly, how she came to a state of decline in the latter half of the medieval age and how that decline was a prelude to her resurgence, now under study.

Fourthly, what the nineteenth-century world-upsurge and its effects were in the West and how its impact on India quickened her modern resurgence, and, incidentally, how India's impact on the West was like a breath of the Spirit upon its culture, as instanced by the author in Kant, Hegel, Goethe, Beethoven and in a few poets of England and America.

Fifthly, how the Vedic vision of *Daivyam janam* finds its embodiment in 'the last of the Rishis' of our day, in the one sent to earth to give it shape.

Sixthly and lastly, how the affirmation, "THE TIME HAS COME", in the concluding chapter, is not only Sri Aurobindo's and the Mother's. It is the unanimous affirma-

\* *Resurgent India* : Sisir Kumar Mitra : Allied Publishers (Private) Limited, Bombay 1, 1963, pp. 432, Royal 8vo. Rs. 26.00.

tion, though in different terms but meaning the same thing, by the great religious philosophies and traditions of Hinduism, Buddhism, Islam, Christianity, Judaism and Taoism and, what is more, even by modern scientists, seeing minds and advanced thinkers of Europe and America, namely, Julian Huxley, Gaston Berger, Arthur Koestler, Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, Rufus M. Jones, Jean Gebser and others, all fixing upon the present period as what Sri Aurobindo and the Mother would simply sum up as 'The Hour of God' or 'God's transfiguring hour'.

## II

One may wonder what fact or force is there to justify this unanimity. The reader will find the luminous and inspiring answer in Chapter XIX on 'New Light, New World'.

It augurs well that the Hour of God of high promise is now a world wide perception, no matter if limited for the moment to the elite of all lands. Almost so was the 18th-19th centuries' movement in Europe of lofty ideas of human freedom, the importance of the individual in the growth of the collectivity and of the supremacy of Reason and scientific thought interspersed with flashes of intuition on Science and poetry, beautiful instances of which have been given by the author in Chapter III. And if this movement led to Britain's industrial revolution, the final democratisation of her Parliament, the overthrow of established governments in America and France, the liberation of Italy and unification of Germany, its impact on the East, in particular, on India has been of a greater and deeper significance.

To understand this significance better, a glimpse may be taken of her immediately antecedent state of decline : the remnants of her spirituality, the backbone of her being, had withdrawn from society into far-off seclusions; religion had become a hollowness of forms and rituals; cultural pursuits degenerated; society grew a mass of superstition and rigidity; political and economic life was subjected to alien control and exploitation.

But Sri Aurobindo read into this decline her sleep or repose 'after a long period of astonishing cultural achievements' up to about the first half of the medieval age. For India's soul, charged with the immortal power of Infinite Light, could know no break-off in its march till it reached the goal of the Vedic Rishis and then, according to Sri Aurobindo, till it completed its cycle by reaching back to its Transcendental Source and shared its treasures with the world and made all creation one with the Creator.

The symbolic sense of the marching of India's soul through 'a succession of Dawns' is her evolutionary progress from age to age, from dawn to dawn, representing an ascending scale of consciousness. The point to note is that India's evolution that started from top downward, from Spirit to Matter, has now to retrace its way upward, from Matter to Spirit, and thus complete its cycle, making God and man, Heaven and Earth, Creator and Creation the Oneness that they really are. Happily,

the world of physical Science is waking up to Sri Aurobindo's truth that no knowledge of the physical is complete without the knowledge of its supraphysical source.

Prof Mitra has convincingly shown that the Vedic constituent of India's soul forming the life-line of her evolutionary culture has gone on manifesting its many-sided sublimities from age to age. Unless this fact is kept in view, the pervading unity of the Odyssey of India's Soul, that *Resurgent India* reflects, will be missed.

Broadly speaking, India's awakening was her reaction to the impact on her of (i) the 19th century Europe, (ii) her aversion to political subjection to an alien power, (iii) her social rigidities and the inanities of her religious practices.

Here we get into the core of the book—India's resurgence in modern times. Truly, it is a continuous process and will require volume after volume to keep up with the pace of its ascending energy. The present study has, necessarily, set for itself a limited scope—only the pioneers of the movement from the starting-point—from Raja Rammohan Roy to Sri Aurobindo : a scope limited but packed as much with rich content of profound interest and suggestiveness as of limitless importance to the present and the future. Any reader with love and good will for Mother India and with an average sense of perception will testify to the fact.

We have all heard or read more or less of the great Indian figures and their worthy collaborators and followers : Rammohan Roy, Maharshi Devendranath Tagore, Jagadish Chandra Bose, Mahadev Govind Ranade, Bal Gangadhar Tilak, Vijaykrishna Goswami, Sri Ramakrishna, Vivekananda, Sister Nivedita, Rajnarayan Bose, Lala Lajpatrai, Kanailal Datta, Jatindranath Mukhopadhyaya, Swami Dayananda Saraswati, Annie Besant, Bankimchandra Chatterjee, Subramania Bharati, Mahatma Gandhi, Chittaranjan Das, Chidambaram Pillai, Vinayak Savarkar, Bhai Paramananda, Lala Hardayal, to name a few out of a number dealt with in the book. But hardly, if ever, have we studied or envisaged them as the pioneer band of co-partners in the rebuilding of our motherland in the present age. They live in their works, in the memory of the nation and in scattered contexts of history. Here the author's historical acumen has arrayed them all in their proper setting in this, presumably the first, authentic work of integrated history of India's resurgence. The pioneers in their biographical bearings and a host of gifted and high-spirited personalities in their distinctive roles all over the land but moved, as it were, by a single unseen Force, form a galaxy of awakened India's luminaries. To us and to our posterity they are inspiring examples of love of country and of dedicated service.

It needs no emphasising that these great souls were true to the spirit and nature of India's evolution and they were thrown up by Nature to fulfil her intenton. And while an English-educated section of our countrymen, glamoured by western culture and western ways of life, started pooh-pooing their religion and culture and were abandoning them, these pioneers held up before them the yet-unexcelled excellence of India's own and thus stemmed the tide of their defection.

What was the driving-force of these pioneers ? Evidently, it was the action of Bharat-Sakti awakening in the leaders an ardent love of India, visions of what she

was and what she would be, longing for her all-round development and liberation and the Truth-force of the ideas and principles of Veda, Vedanta and Upanishad. It was the combined action of all these forces on their alert minds framed in Reason but open to Intuition.

Brilliant products of English education all of them, these leaders exposed society and religion to the cold light of reason, and purged them of superstitions, perversions and obscurantisms and cleared the path to progress. But unlike Europe, as true Indians, they put intuition above reason and spiritual knowledge above both.

Of India's decline we have just had a glimpse. Now we may have another—of her rise. The resurgent spirit manifested itself in our leaders' constructive and organisational activities—social, educational and political, and in a wonderful efflorescence of literature, art and science. From Bankim's pen flowed majestic prose rich in visions and high idealism; from Madhusudan's ran blank-verse epics of Miltonic power; from Rabindranath's, cascades of prose and poetry, lyrics and songs pulsating with love and beauty, greatness and glory of the India that was and of the India to be. And as some of Rabindranath's mystic poems took the world to a world beyond, so did the art of Abanindranath and his school from the finite to the infinite. In Jagadishchandra Bose and Prafullachandra Ray science found its frontiers extended and the Vedic truth vindicated. Lajpatrai, Tilak, Bipinchandra Pal and Sri Aurobindo metamorphosed politics into a deep-seated spirit of independence in the national consciousness while Sri Aurobindo, in particular, infused into it the dynamism of his spiritual Force.

And while Europe took reason or mind for man's supreme faculty and made marvellous advance in science, industry and technology, India prized these valuable achievements as necessities and enrichments of life but, instead of complacently stopping short there, moved farther ahead to discover and possess a power higher than the highest heights of reason—a new faculty that has the infinite power of new creation. Herein lies the greater and deeper significance of India's reaction to the 19th century upsurge in Europe. And here ends, for purposes of our study, the divinely-guided pilgrimage of India's soul, from light to more light, till it has reached the Supramental Light in Sri Aurobindo and his collaborator, the Mother.

Now, and from now, it is the Mother's and Sri Aurobindo's to fulfil their God-given work of world-transformation. And, to the great good fortune of the world, they both stand pledged to its fulfilment.

### III

*Deva-atma Himachal*, the divine-souled Himalayas—that is how the highest mountains of our land are known, and the plains below on which we live *devabhūmi*, the land of the gods.

No empty phrases of national self-glorification these. 'The hero, the Rishi, the saint are the natural fruits of our Indian soul', says the Seer-Voice.

Vivekananda's India is 'the land of Eternal Verities'. He had but one love, his motherland, and one grief, her downfall. . .the thought of India was to him like the air he breathed. He would say India's spirituality alone could save mankind. He visioned his motherland 'walking with her own majestic steps to fulfil her glorious destiny—the regeneration of man the brute into man the God.' For further light of Vivekananda on India the reader is referred to pp. 253-255 of *Resurgent India*.

Rabindranath speaks of himself to his country :

'Blessed am I that I am born in this land,  
Blessed my birth that I love thee, Mother.'

Dwijendralal Roy sings :

'India, my India, where first human eyes awoke to heavenly light,  
All Asia's holy place of pilgrimage, great Motherland of might.  
World-Mother, first giver to humankind of philosophy and sacred lore...'

(*Resurgent India*, p.289)

Sri Aurobindo's India is not 'a stretch of earth or a mass of individuals' but 'a Power, a Godhead'. He worshipped her as Mother and wrote of her with rare insight:

'...among all the divisions of mankind, it is to India that is reserved the highest and the most splendid destiny, the most essential to the future of the human race. It is she who must send forth from herself the future religion of the entire world, the Eternal Religion which is to harmonise all religion, science and philosophies, and make mankind one Soul—the greatest and most wonderful work ever given to a race.' (p.352)

'...It would be a tragic irony of fate if India were to throw away her spiritual heritage at the very moment when in the rest of the world there is more and more a turning towards her for spiritual help and a saving Light. This must not and will surely not happen; but it cannot be said that the danger....No doubt we will win through but we must not disguise from ourselves that after these long years of subjection and its cramping and impairing effects a greater inner as well as outer liberation and change, a vast inner and outer progress is needed if we are to fulfil India's true destiny (pp. 396-397).

And with all the force of his living Truth he affirmed :

'...She (India) is destined once more to new-mould the life of the world and restore the peace of the human spirit.' (p. 360)

Yet what a tragic paradox it is that even now the sacred soil and air of such an India should be fouled by a breed of Judas Iscariots, Mirzafars and Naren Gossains

<sup>1</sup> For instances see *Resurgent India*, pp. 403-409.

working underground to sap her integrity and her independence. No less a tragedy is the fact that most of our rising generations pass through their university courses with hardly a knowledge of the India they should know. It may be because of the absence, so far, of a book of this type. For no book, to our knowledge, has gone beyond the usual dimensions of its contents.

May *Resurgent India* that pictures our motherland's rise from her luminous depths towards her meridian heights meet this desideratum. It is a book that informs, instructs, elevates, inspires. It is a book for all lovers of India here and everywhere.

TINKARI MITRA

## BOOKS IN THE BALANCE

**The Flute of New Life** (The Message of a Comprehensive View of Life by C. Hanumantha Rao, Veerabhadrapuram, Rajhamundry, Andhra Pradesh): Pp. 110.

THIS is a collection of five passages from ancient Hindu Scriptures rendered into English with a short exposition of the basic view of life held forth by them. It is the aim of the 'Flute of New Life' to reclaim the Integralism of Purnavada through its different stages with the help of the five passages selected.

The first passage is Self-Transcendence of Sri Sankaracharya who propounded Mayavada which rejects the world as an illusion but accepts both the Jiva and Brahman. As a sublime doctrine advocating self-transcendence, the Mayadvaita, through the six stanzas on Nirvana or peace of mind, constitutes the base and the foundation of the message of the 'Flute'. At a later stage, after the sadhaka has passed by the stage of self-transcendence, the organic integration of Prakriti and Purusha, matter and spirit, in the Brahman, the three typical systems of philosophy—Advaita, Vishishtadvaita and Dvaita—treated as only successive stages formerly—become the complementary components of the integrated personality, indispensable attributes which cannot be shed off at any stage of perfection. The second and third passages are the Nasadeeya and the Purusha Suktas which are indeed the most famous passages of the Rigveda. The Message of the Nasadeeya Sukta glorifies the truth—the oneness of matter and spirit, while the Purusha Sukta portrays how the Integral Reality becomes the conditioned, partial and manifest Reality in the form of creation or cosmos. The fourth passage is Isa Upanishad which teaches how this partial reality integrates with the Full, how the individual cosmos is fulfilled in the Universal Brahman. Taking the cue from Sri Aurobindo, who has remarked that verses 49 to 66 of the last chapter of the Gita are the essence of the whole text, the author selects them as the last passage by the Flute. The Gita is the song of Krishna's Flute, sprouting and blossoming New Life, the melody and message of Satchidananda—the confluence of the triple stream of Reality, Consciousness and Bliss, starting in the aspirant as the unity and harmony of action, speech and thought or mind, the *thrikarna suddhi*, as it is otherwise called. In action accomplished through the senses and the body is the reality manifested, speech embodies the consciousness felt in Jnana or thought, and through the mind and heart is enjoyed the emotional bliss or the Divine Bhakti. Sat is the mystic Presence, the most profound experience in intuition, Satchidananda is the sadhana of Integralism, the Purna Yoga of Karma, Jnana and Bhakti (110) It is the very acme of self-perfection with the roots of the Reality firmly struck into the native soil of action as the self-service of all (ii).

P. RAGHAVA RAJU



**Little Story Books**—Book 5 : Ducks on the Train; Book 6 : Ducks go to the Orchard; Book 7 : Ducks in the village; Book 8 : A Pond for the Ducks. Published by Frederick Warne & Co., Ltd. Chandos House, Bedford Court, Bedford Street, Strand, W.C. 2, London.

These story books are a delight for children especially because the coloured illustrations are so meaningfully instructive on their own merit.

The vocabulary would suit students of English in their third year but the pictures could very well be utilised for lower classes.

The vocabulary density index is c. 3.5:1 (one in every third-and-a-half words is a different word). This is quite high for such a comparatively simple vocabulary and should therefore serve as an excellent index for learning effectively.

NORMAN C. DOWSETT

N.B. It may be of interest to readers to know that a vocabulary frequency test was carried out by the students of class 5 in English, of the school section of Sri Aurobindo International Centre of Education, Pondicherry.

**The Young Scientist's Approach to Light** by T. H. Whitney. Published by the same as above. Pp. 114.

Ours is an age dominated by the spirit of Science and flooded with the achievements of her ingenious child Technology. And as a result the science content of our educational programme tends to increase day by day.

It is thus quite natural that a growing child even in his early boyhood should have some acquaintance with this specialized discipline that goes by the name of science. With this laudable object in view Messrs. Frederick Warne & Co. are bringing out a series of introductory handbooks of which the title under review is one.

In his *Young Scientist's Approach to Light*, Mr. T. H. Whitney has admirably presented the basic optical phenomena in a way easily comprehensible to the young child. The text is replete with simple but elegant drawings and diagrams, and describes in detail numerous experiments which the child in his familiar surroundings can easily carry out and by himself deduce conclusions from.

We have no doubt that the young children for whom it is meant will find in Mr. Whitney's book a source that satisfies at the same time educational requirements and the child's need for innocent recreation.

JUGAL KISHORE MUKHERJI

# Students' Section

## THE DESCENT OF THE BLUE

### ACT XII

#### SCENE 8

(1940. *An eminent Indian political leader and a well-known disciple of Sri Aurobindo.*)

LEADER : What does your Guru say about the outcome of the War ?

DISCIPLE : The Allies will win and he is doing his best to see that they win.

LEADER : The Allies despite their series of reverses and their ineptitude ? And, even if they win, won't their victory reinforce and perpetuate their imperialism ?

DISCIPLE : None knows the Allies, their ins and outs, more than Sri Aurobindo, and none has given the British Empire a greater shake-up than he.

LEADER : And yet he lends them his support ? Indeed, it is a puzzle to me.

DISCIPLE : No puzzle. He has given his crystal-clear and far-reaching why.

LEADER : Tell me, please.

DISCIPLE : The Allies will stand for freedom and progress, whereas the axis-powers for world domination. And the axis-powers in the ascendant will throw the world back into serfdom. He has written, speaking for the Mother and himself :

"We feel that not only is this a battle waged in just self-defence and in defence of the nations threatened with the world-domination of Germany and the Nazi system of life, but that it is a defence of civilisation and its highest attained social, cultural and spiritual values and of the whole future of humanity. To this cause our support and sympathy will be unswerving whatever may happen; we look forward to the victory of Britain and, as the eventual result, an era of peace and union among the nations and a better and more secure world-order."

LEADER : Those who know Sri Aurobindo well may share his view but the multitude....

DISCIPLE (*interrupting*) : The Seer and the multitude....

#### SCENE 9

(*On the eve of India's Independence, August 15, 1947. Sri Aurobindo's room. A disciple and Sri Aurobindo.*)

DISCIPLE : To-morrow is your birthday and India's—India's rebirth in independence. A divine coincidence. The occasion has attracted an unusually large number of visitors for Darshan.

SRI AUROBINDO : No accident, to be sure.

DISCIPLE : It is the victory of the struggle for independence you led under the captaincy of God, the fulfilment of the word He gave you in Alipore Jail. The Mother has a flag-staff set up on the top of your room. To-morrow she is going to hoist the flag, because it is India's spiritual flag as well.

SRI AUROBINDO : You are right. But a divided India, a mixed blessing. It will entail on the Mother a continuing burden of problems till India has her integral solidarity.

DISCIPLE : I am sure, if that is God's Will the Mother will bear it with your help and guidance. No truth can rest divided for long.

SRI AUROBINDO : That's it. All divisions all over the world must go before it becomes one for the ONE. His Will will triumph over human folly.

SCENE 10 <sup>1</sup>

(*Sri Aurobindo's room. Sri Aurobindo and his amanuensis, Nirod.*)

SRI AUROBINDO : Take up *Savitri*. I want to finish it soon.

(*Puzzled at the words Nirod looks at the Master's face and finds it impassive. He reads out.*)

A day may come when she must stand unhelped  
On a dangerous brink of the world's doom and hers.

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†\*

In that tremendous silence lone and lost  
Cry not to heaven, for she alone can help.  
She only can save herself and save the world.

SRI AUROBINDO : Ah, it is finished? What is left now ?

NIROD : The Book of Death and the Epilogue.

SRI AUROBINDO : Ah, that ? We shall see about that later on.

SCENE 11

(*December 4, 1950. Sri Aurobindo has not been keeping well for some time. But to-day he seems to feel better. He sits in a chair in spite of his attendants' objections.*)

AN ATTENDANT : At last, our prayer has been heard! Are you not using your force to get rid of the disease ?

SRI AUROBINDO : No.

AN ATTENDANT (*failing to believe his ears*): Why not? If you don't use the force, how is the disease going to be cured ?

SRI AUROBINDO : Can't explain; you won't understand.

<sup>1</sup> Based on Nirodbaran's booklet *I am Here ! I am Here !*

## SCENE 12

*Sri Aurobindo's passing. Date—December 5, 1950. Ashram premises. Inmate in tears. A disciple comes down with a message from the Mother and reads :*

“To grieve is an insult to Sri Aurobindo, who is here with us conscious and alive.”

*(A profound stillness falls over all. Into drooping spirits passes the force of the Mother's words. An air of assurance reigns. Tears give way to confidence.)*

## SCENE 13

*(Outside the Ashram. A and B, two disciples of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother, in a reminiscent mood.)*

B : Mother's words have put heart into me. Oh, what a folly had overtaken me ! Sri Aurobindo is above Life and Death—the one cannot bind Him, the other cannot touch Him.

A : That's what the Master Yogi is. And even more. His physical presence in the Ashram was never its confinement. With the whole earth for his sphere of action, he was wherever his presence was called for. Space and Time are for us humans, not for the Master of Supramental Yoga. Let us never forget what the Mother has said :

DECEMBER 9, 1950

TO THEE WHO HAST BEEN THE MATERIAL ENVELOPE OF OUR  
MASTER, TO THEE OUR INFINITE GRATITUDE. BEFORE THEE WHO  
HAST DONE SO MUCH FOR US, WHO HAST WORKED, STRUGGLED,  
SUFFERED, HOPED, ENDURED SO MUCH, BEFORE THEE WHO HAST  
WILLED ALL, ATTEMPTED ALL, PREPARED, ACHIEVED ALL FOR US,  
BEFORE THEE WE BOW DOWN AND IMPLORE THAT WE MAY  
NEVER FORGET EVEN FOR A MOMENT, ALL WE OWE TO THEE.

*(The plates bearing these words of the Mother's in English translation and in the French original are fixed on the two sides of the Samadhi, north and south. They attract an assembly of sadhaks, coming up, reading it and pausing beside it, file after file, in a meditative silence.)*

*Concluded*

CHINMOY